MITCH KAPOR: WHY MICROSOFT MUST BE STOPPED

Southern California's Computer Magazine

June 19, 1998 • #180

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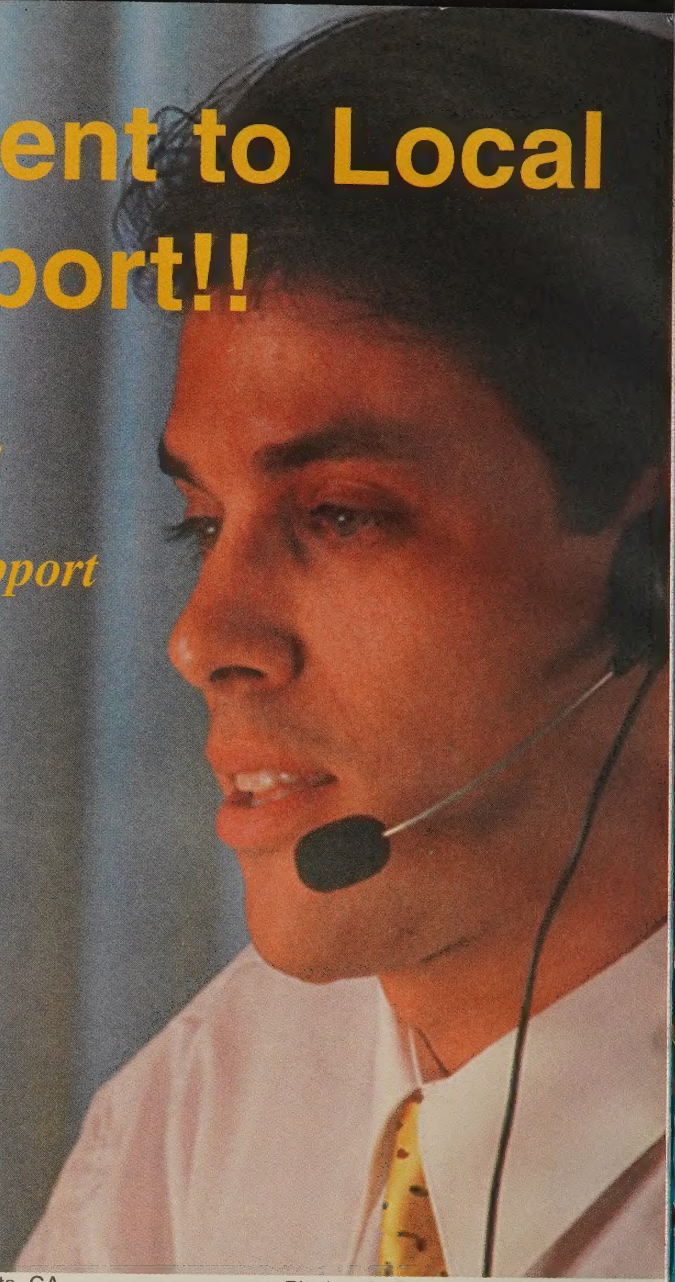

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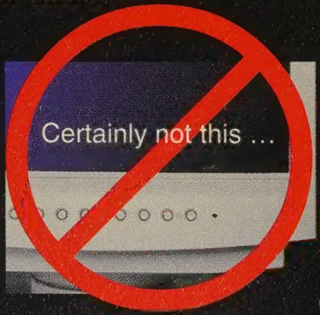
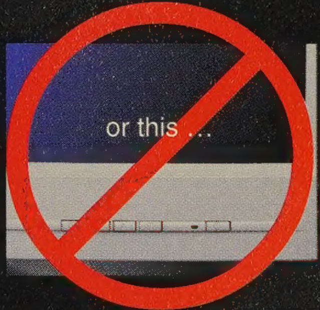


Old-style technology
Too many buttons
Not user friendly



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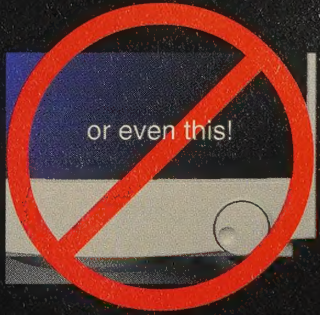

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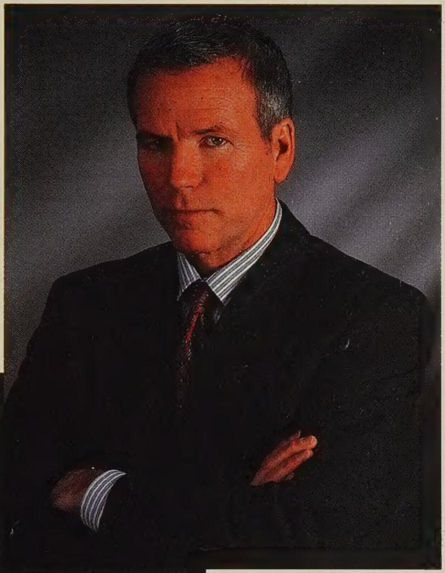

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▲ **Advanced Digital Solutions International, Inc.,** *Milpitas, CA*

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Criminal Prosecution:

Individuals: Up to ten years and $2 million

Companies: Up to ten years and $5 million

The combined resources of Microsoft, the Business Software Alliance, and law enforcement agencies are behind this industry-wide effort.

If you're a system builder, be sure to protect yourself by obtaining Microsoft® OEM products from the authorized distributors listed below. If you're concerned about the legitimacy of your software, call 1-800-RU-LEGIT, e-mail piracy@microsoft.com, or visit our website at: www.microsoft.com/piracy/.

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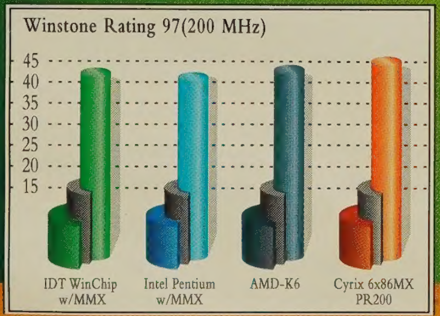

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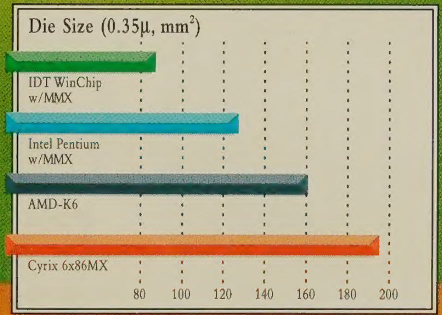

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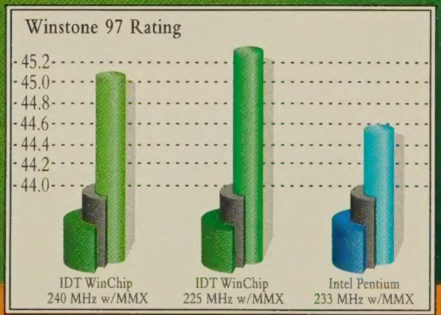

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BYTE MAGAZINE
APRIL 1998

Users Choice Award
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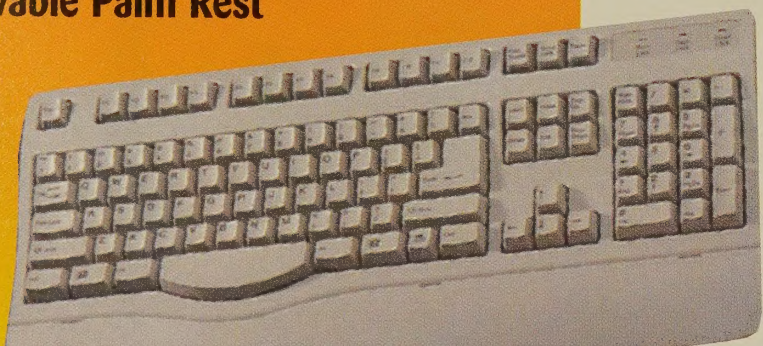

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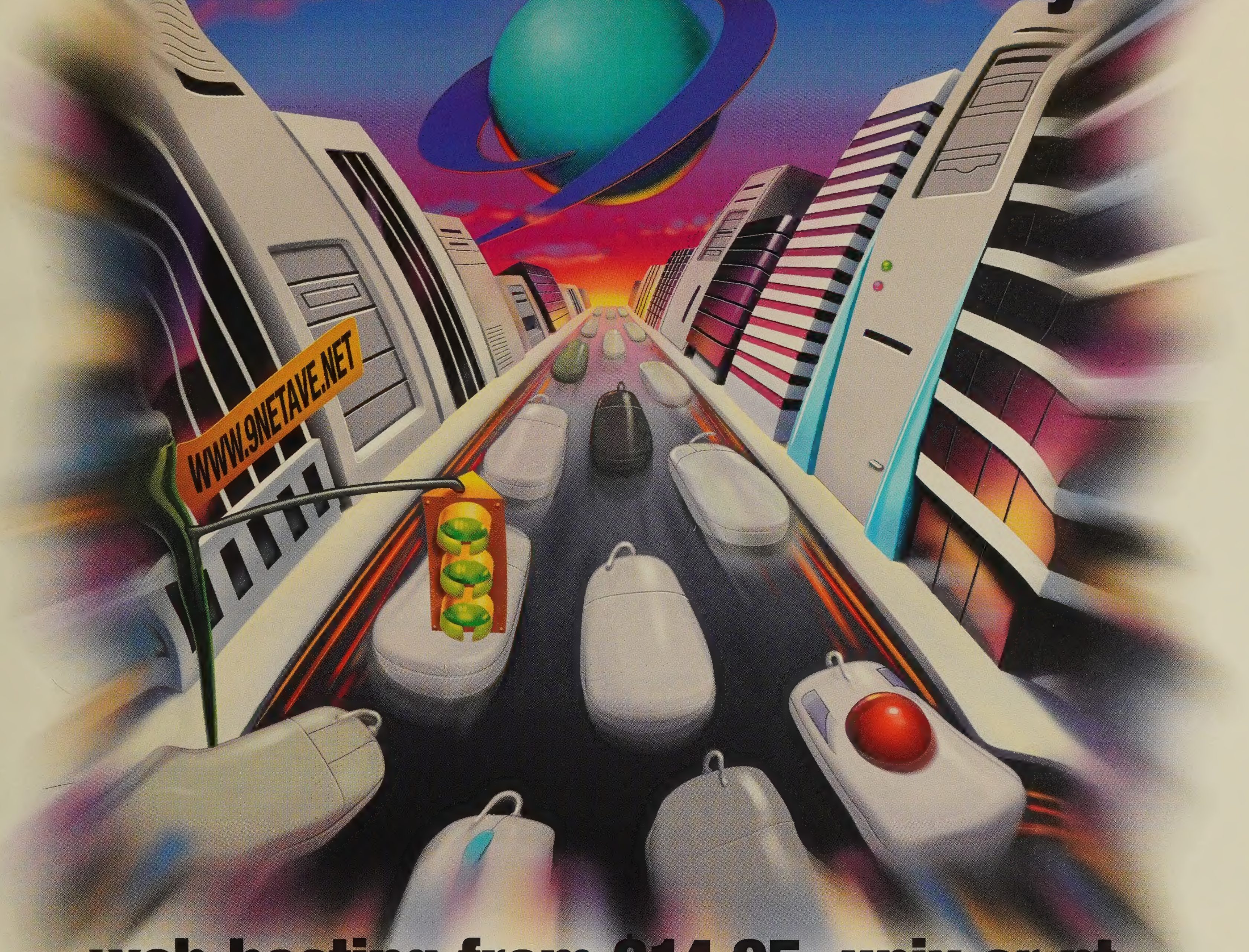

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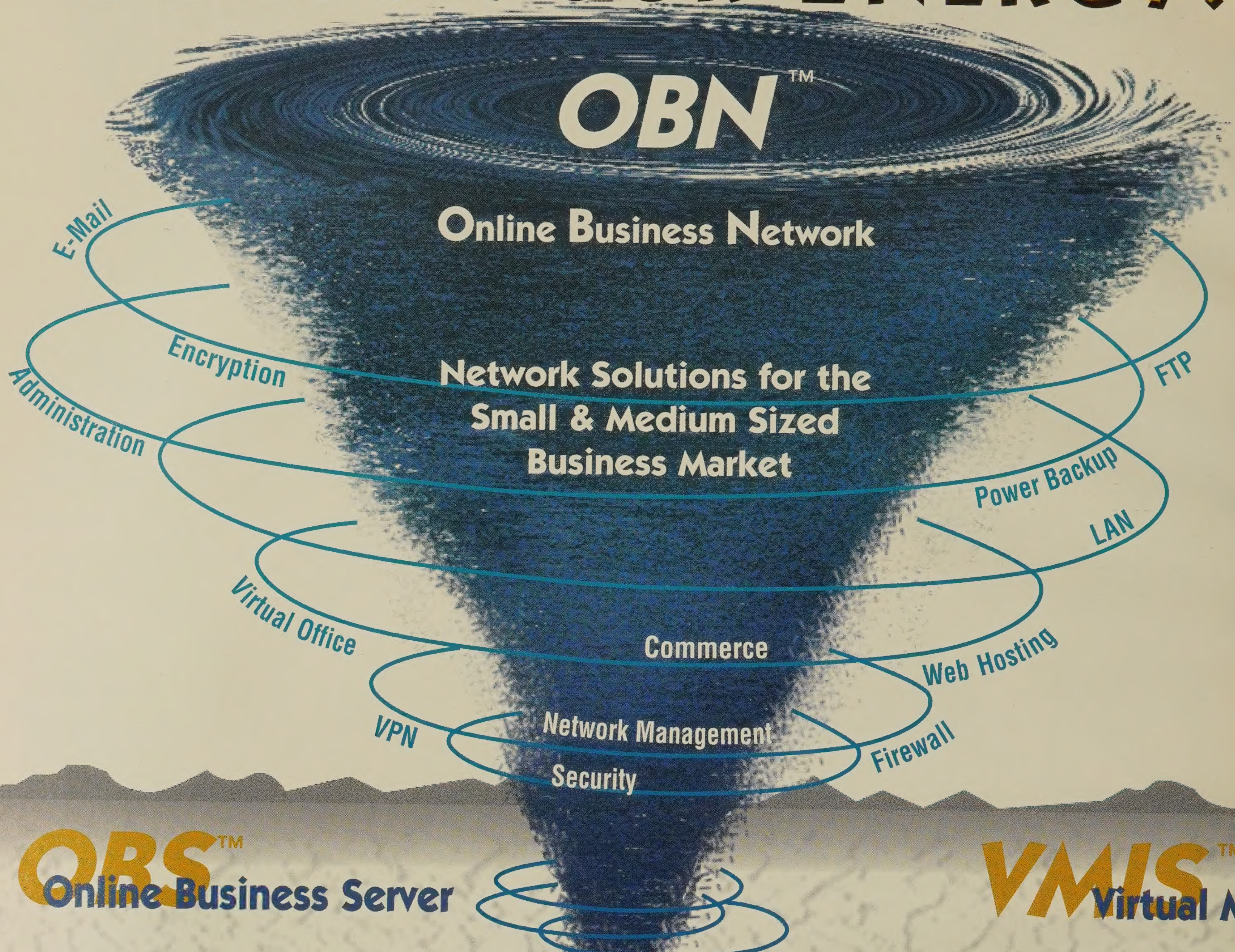

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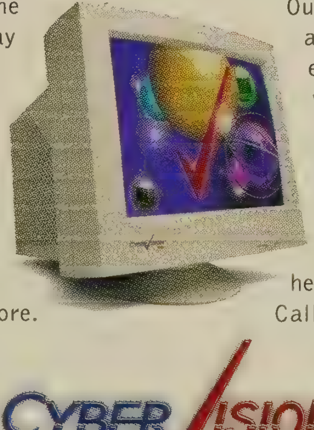

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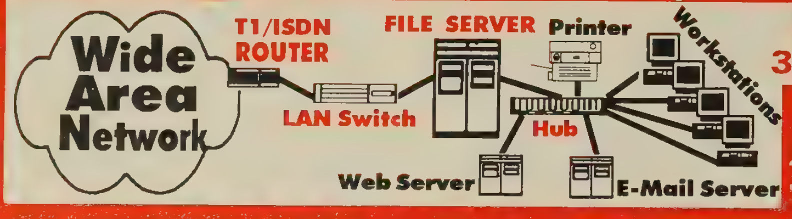

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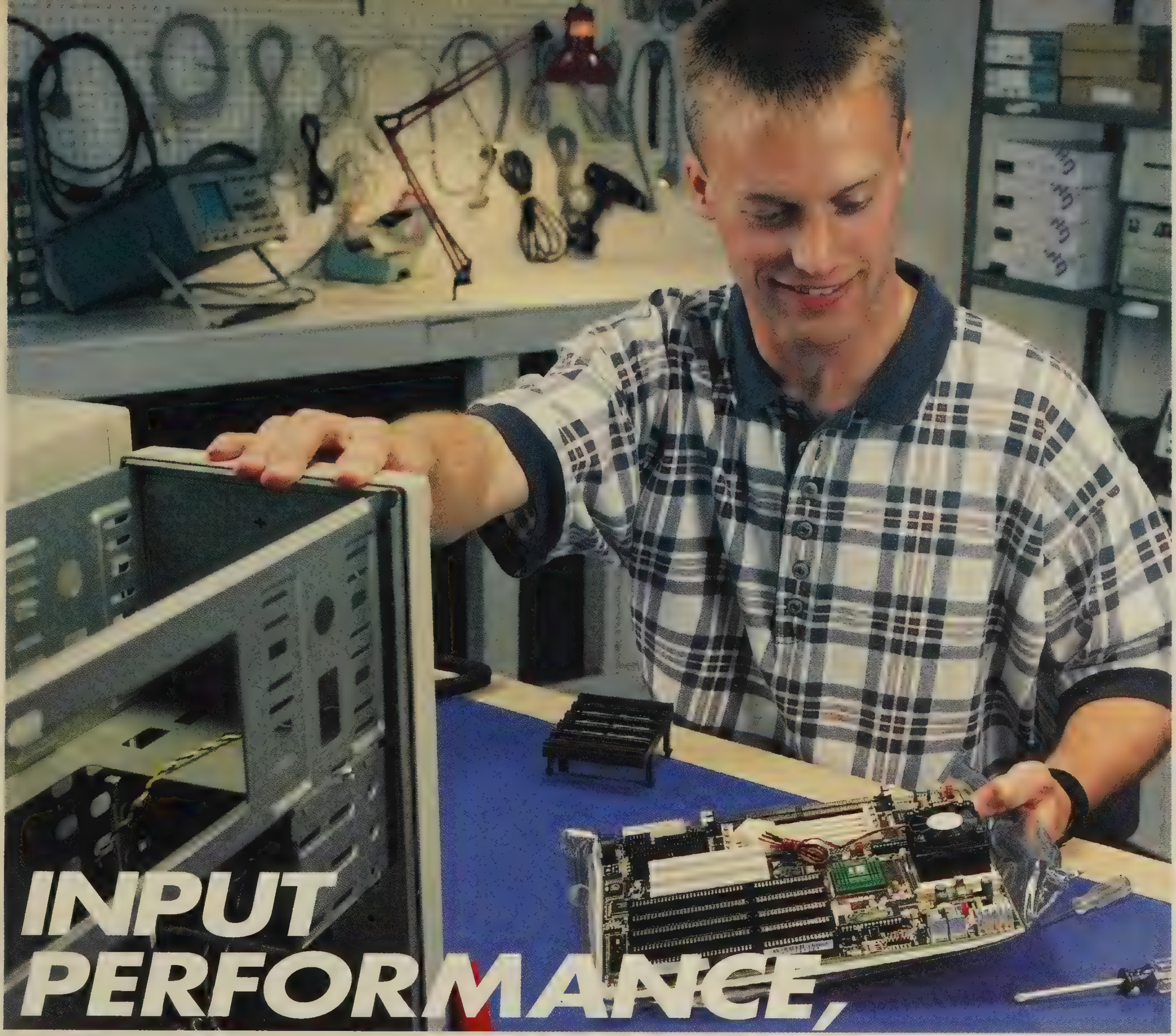

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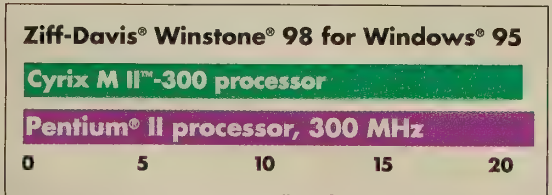

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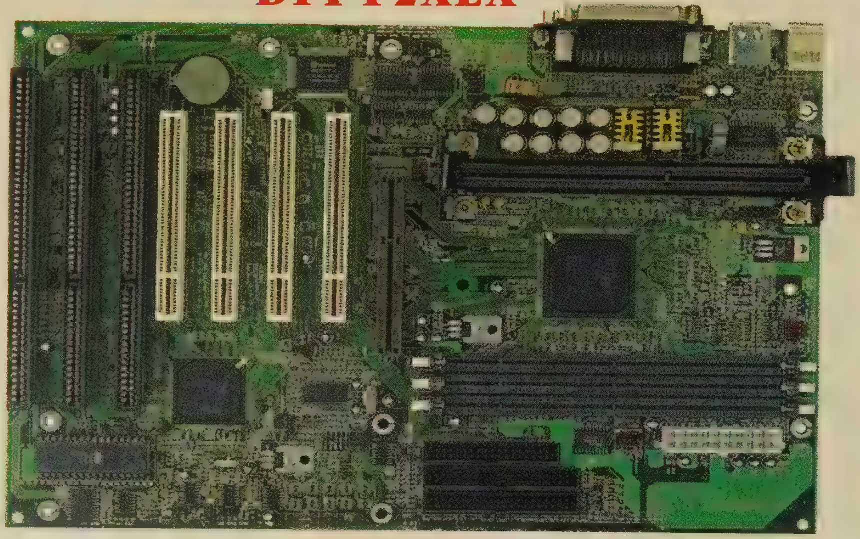

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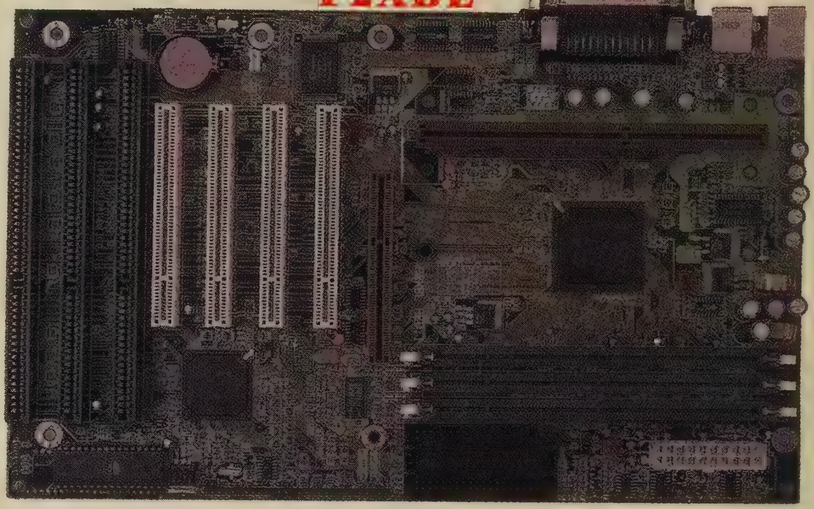

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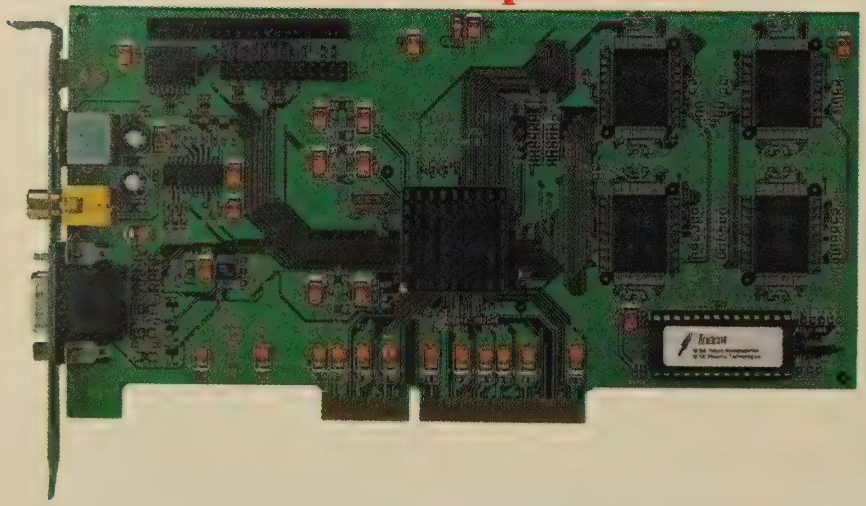

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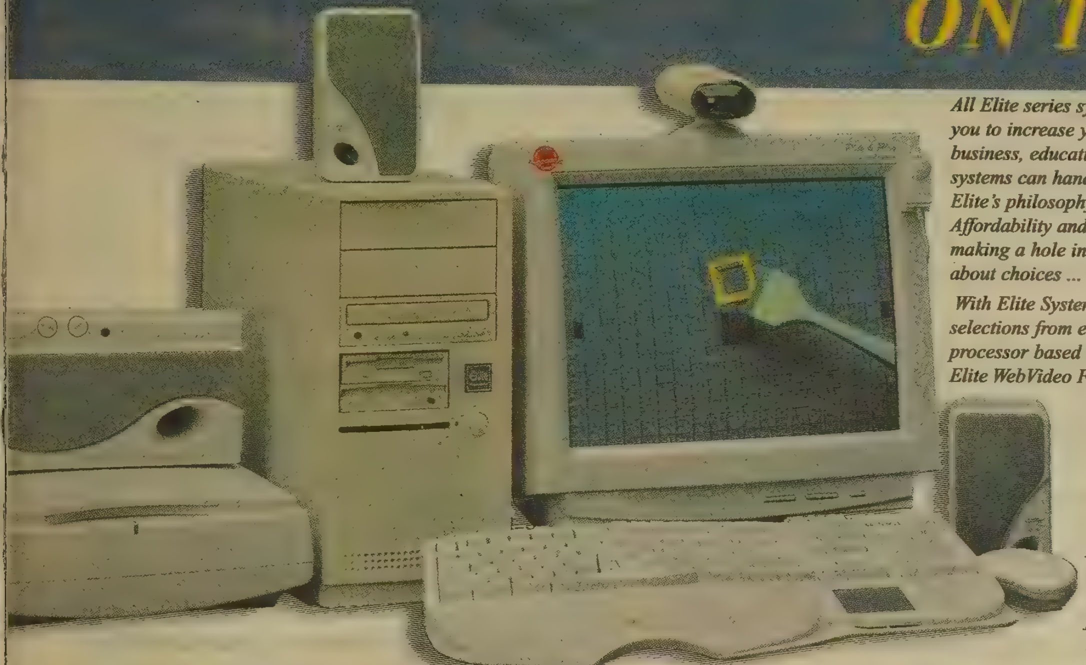

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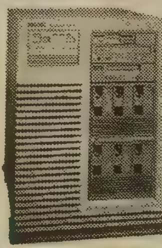

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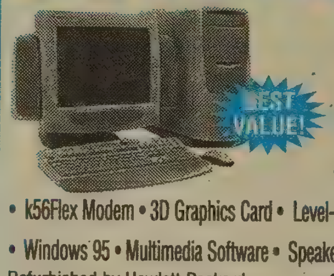

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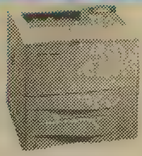

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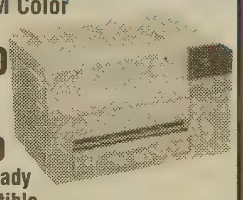

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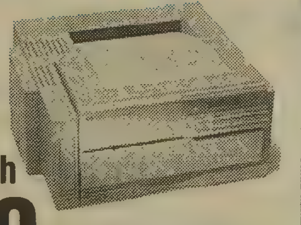

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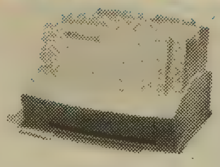

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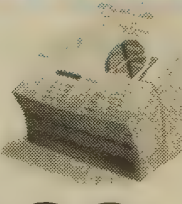

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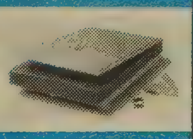

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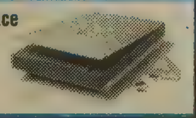

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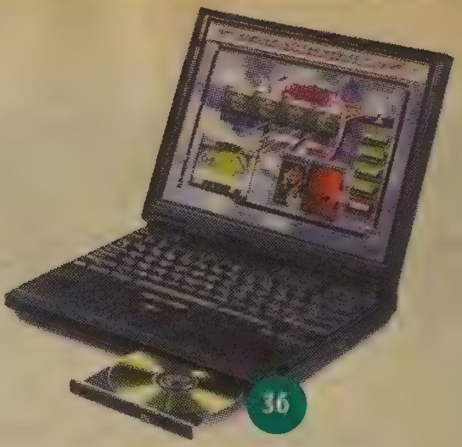

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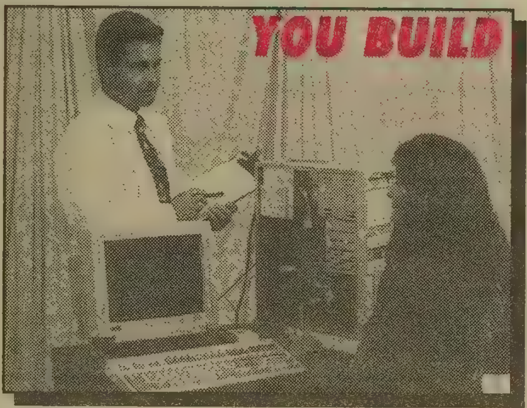

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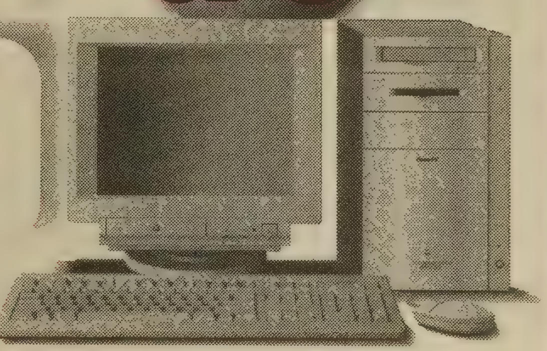

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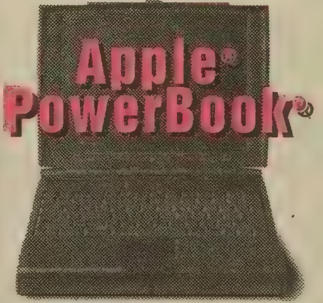

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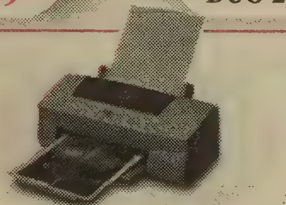

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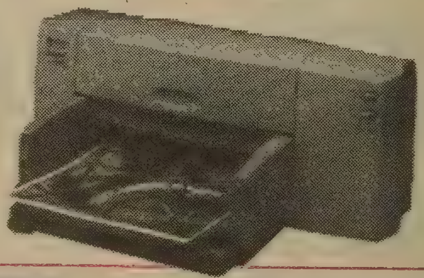

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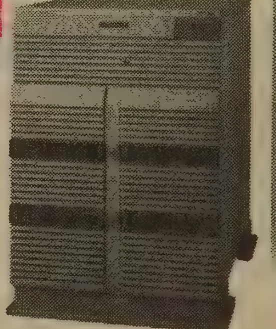

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1640	K6-266MMX	32MB/56K	4GB+20X	12.1TFT	[illegible]
1650	P2-266MMX	64MB	4GB+20X	12.1TFT	[illegible]
1655	P2-266MMX	64MB/56K	4GB+20X	12.1DSCAN	[illegible]

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1592DMT	P-233MMX	32MB/56K	3.1GB+20X	12.1TFT	$2830
1598DMT	P-266MMX	32MB/56K	4GB+20X	13.3TFT	$3199
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460CDX	P-166MMX	32MB/ 33.6K	2.02GB+10X	12.1DSCN	$1525
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490XCDT	P2-266MMX	32MB/ 56K	3.82GB+20X	13.3TFT	$3320
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530CDT	P-166MMX	32MB/33.6K	2.02GB+10X	12.1TFT	$2790
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MicroTimes

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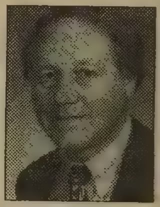
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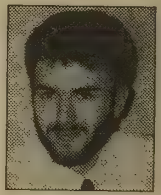
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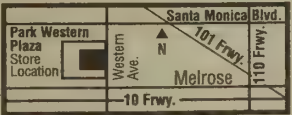

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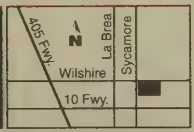

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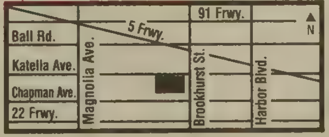

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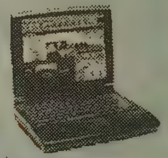

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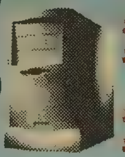

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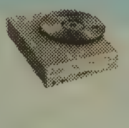

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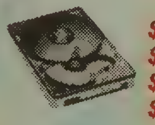

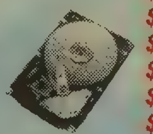

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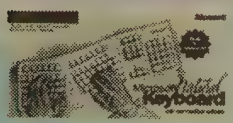

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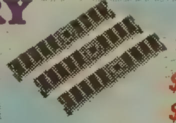

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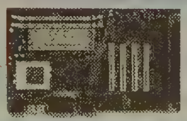

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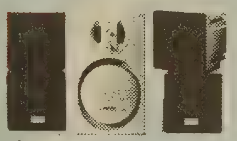

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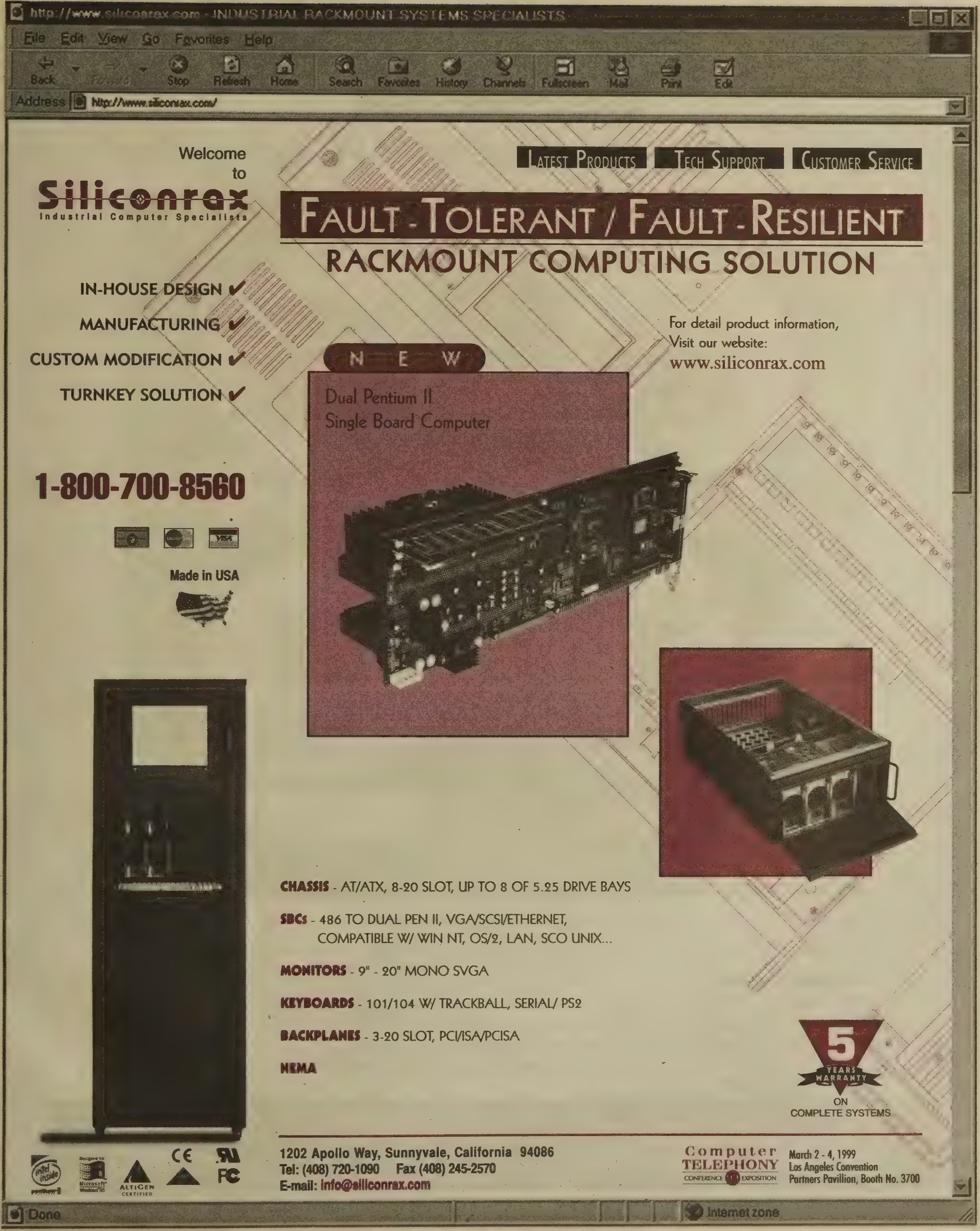

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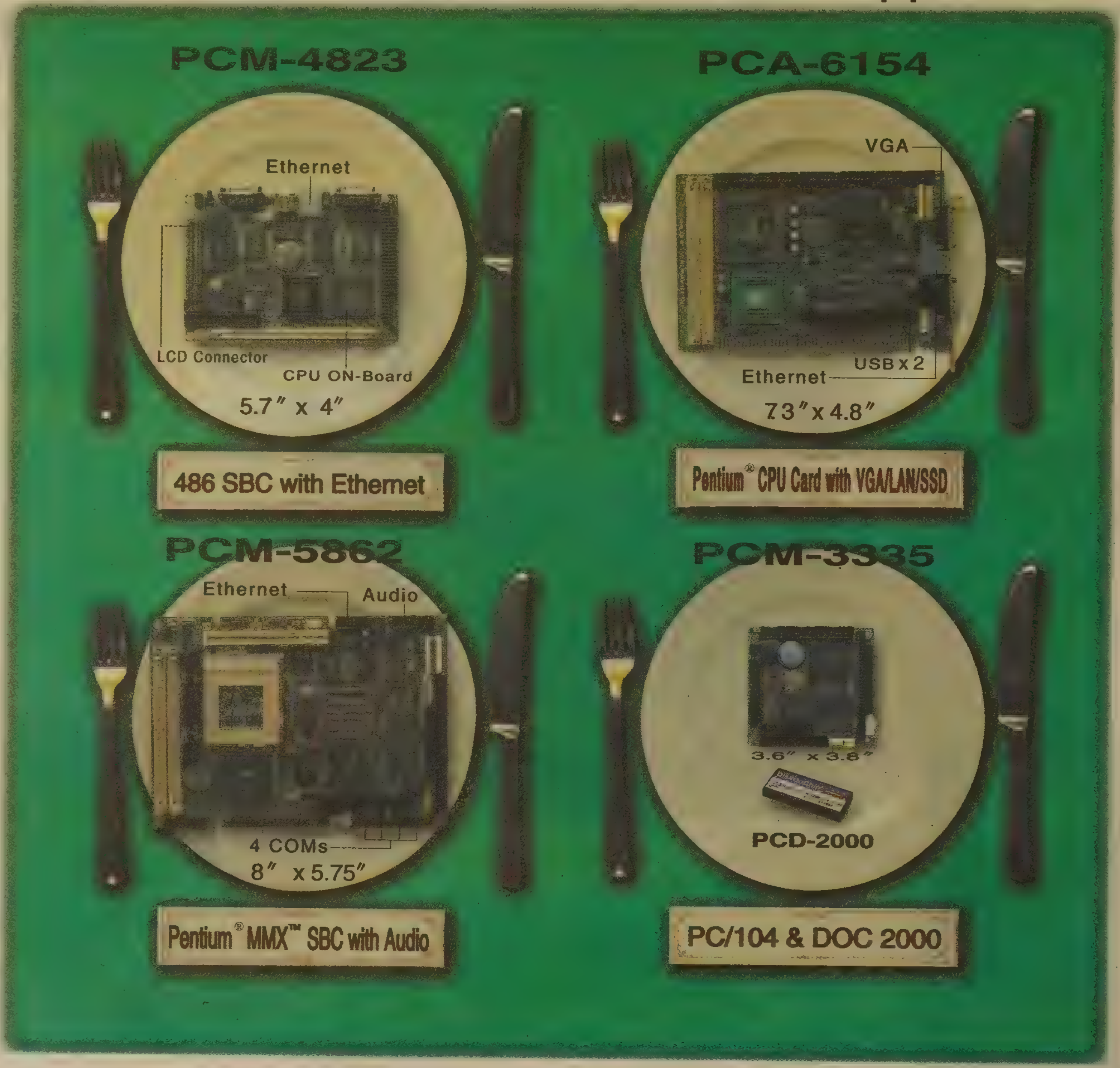

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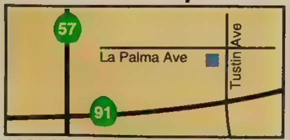

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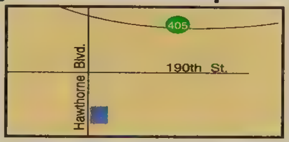

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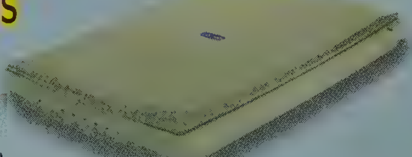

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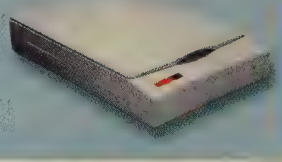

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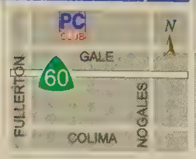

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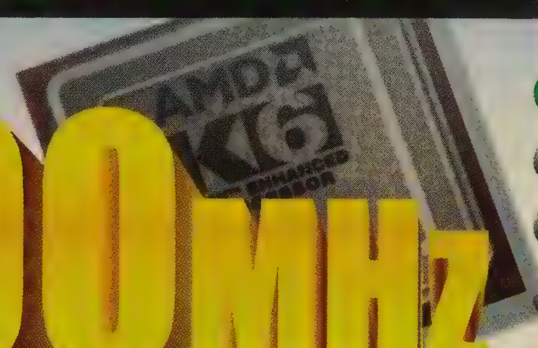

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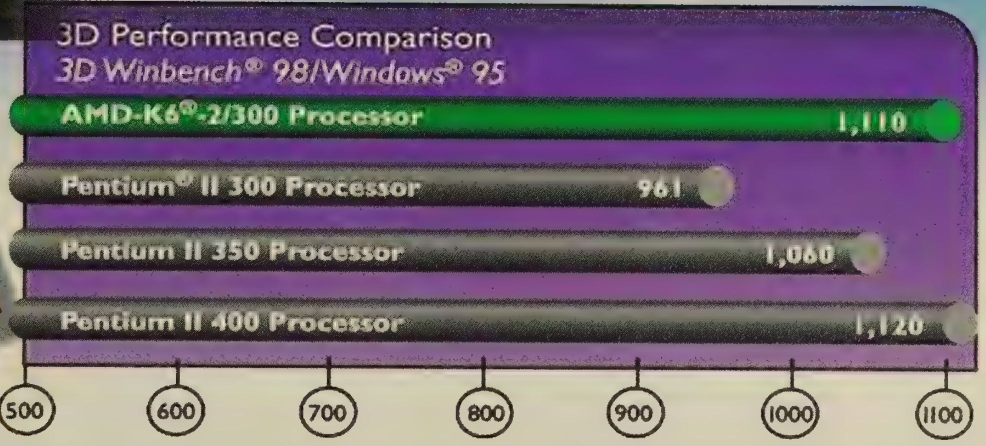

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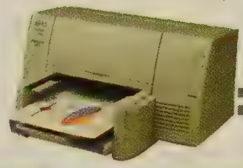

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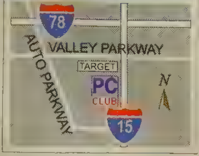

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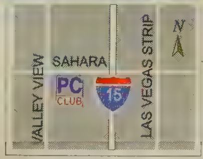

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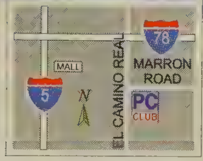

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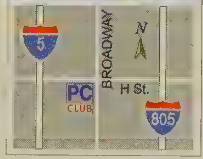

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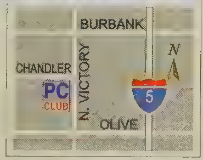

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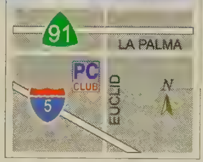

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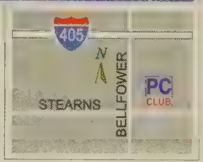

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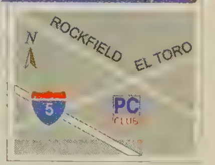

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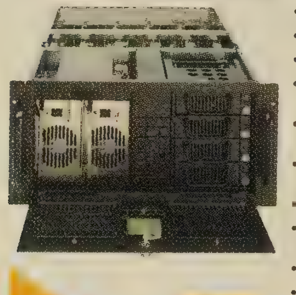

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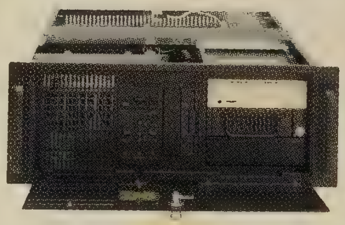

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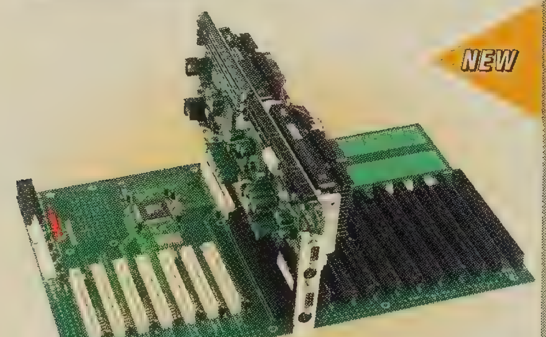

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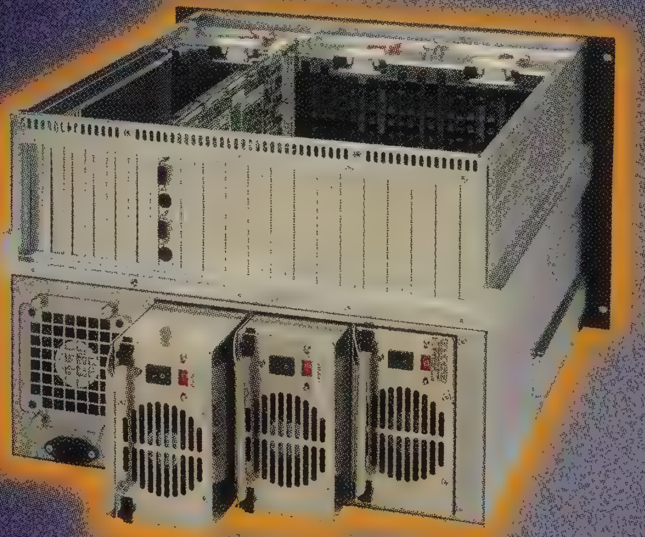

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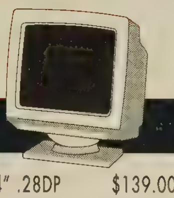

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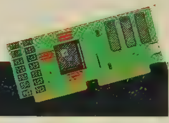

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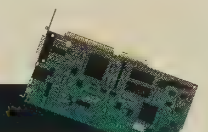

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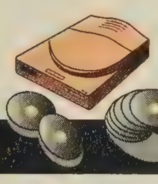

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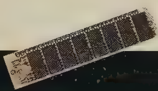

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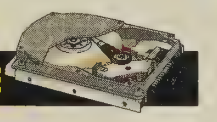

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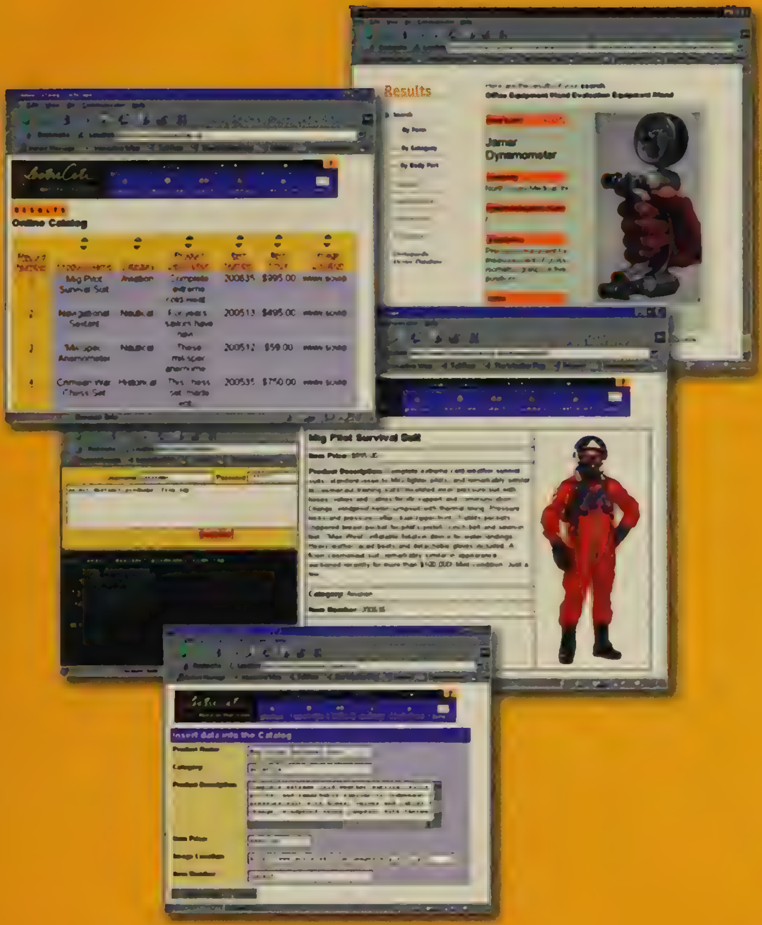

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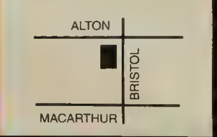

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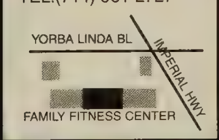

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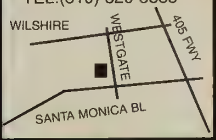

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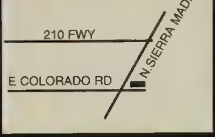

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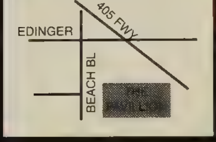

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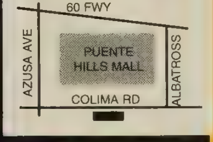

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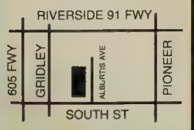

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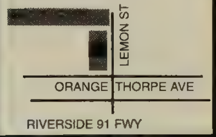

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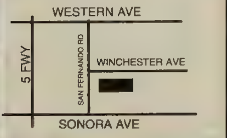

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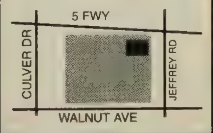

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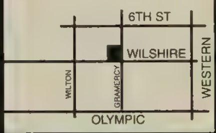

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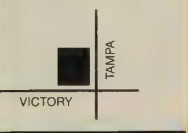

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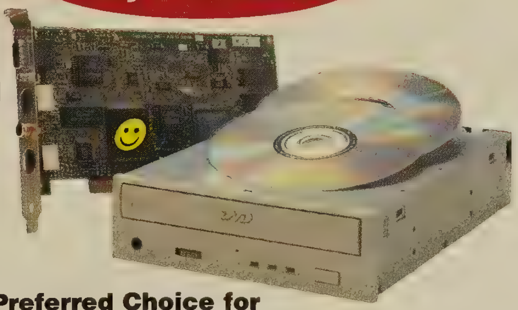

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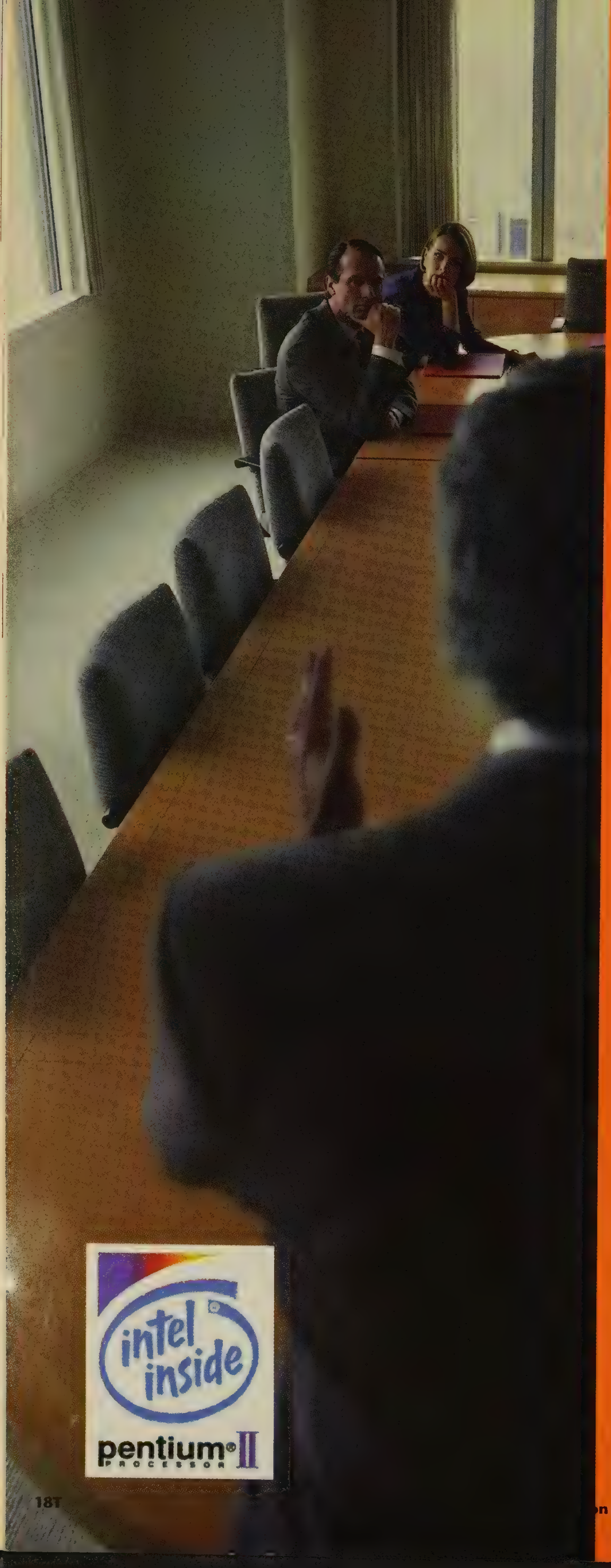

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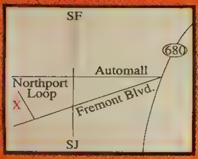

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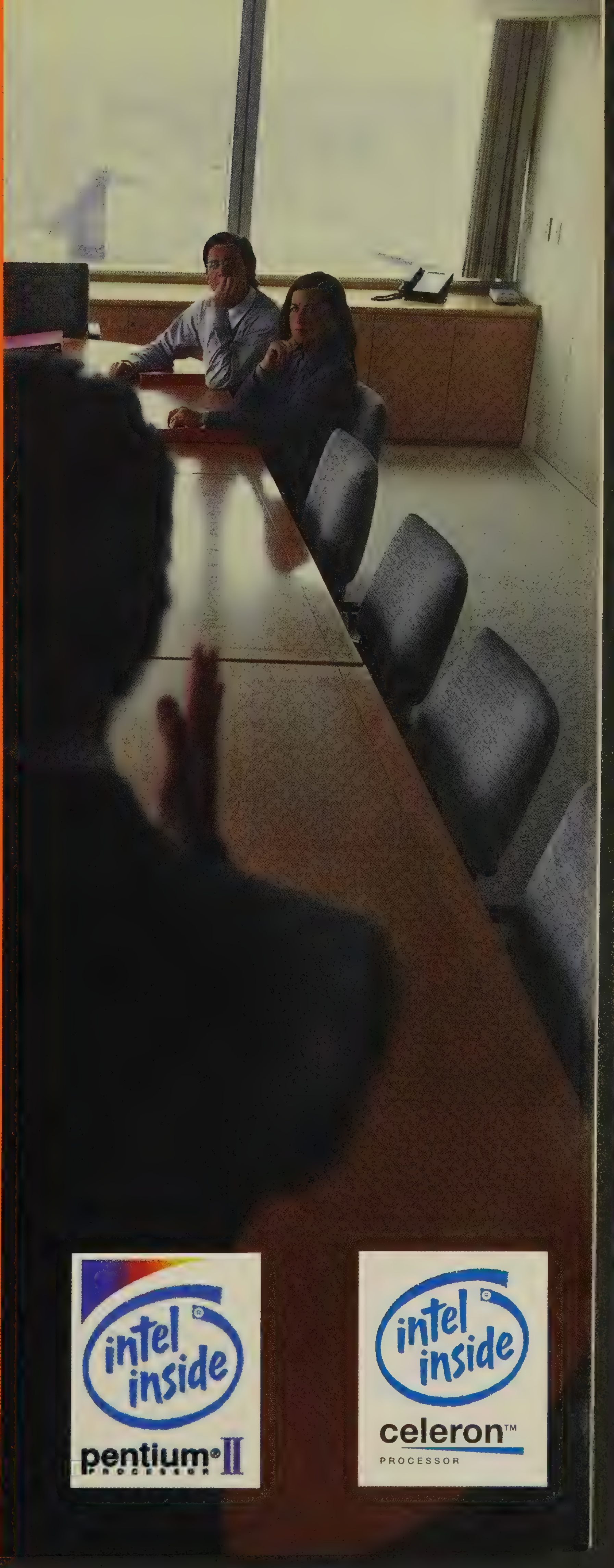

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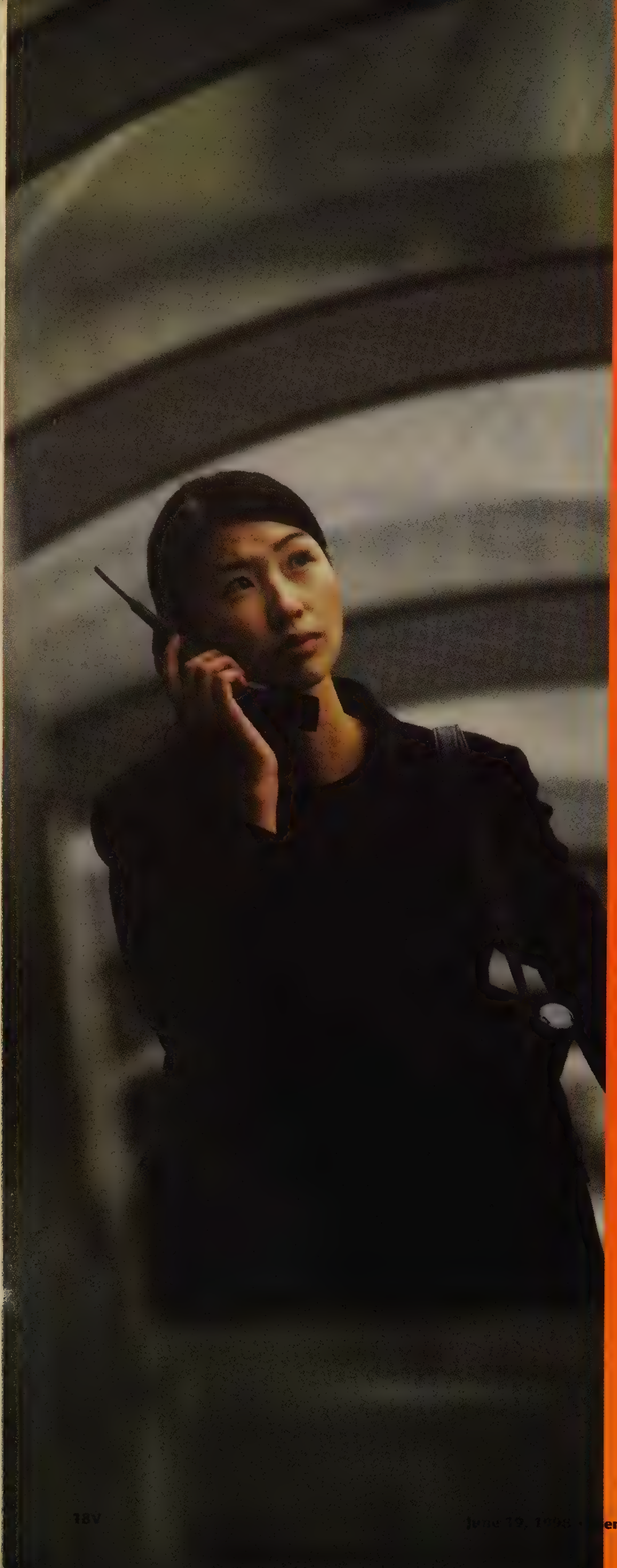

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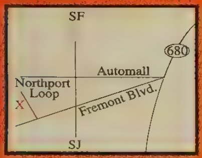

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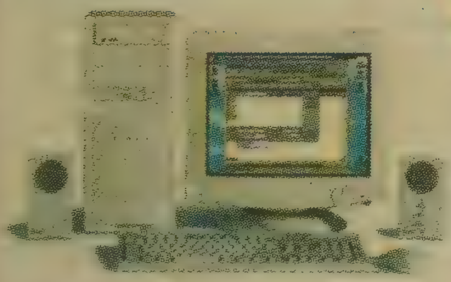

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Emerging Data Standard

XML May Prove That Data Is Mightier Than Transport

By Paul Hoffman

The Internet has really always been about content. People don't find television interesting because of its electronics. People watch TV for the variety of content they can find; that same variety is what has made the Web and Internet mail so popular.

Five years ago, people looked at the Internet as the bearer of interesting content. Since then, the content has flourished; techniques of getting content to users have struggled to keep up.

Even today, getting basic audio to basic users is fraught with problems that we hear will be fixed "really soon now" when everyone has "fat pipes" to their homes and offices.

But the Internet has really always been about content. People don't find television interesting because of its electronics; in fact, today's TV electronics are amazingly similar to those twenty years ago. People watch TV for the variety of content they can find, and that variety is what has made the Web and Internet mail so popular.

Even as the amount of content on the Internet explodes, the types of content available could go through a big change due to a new technology brought to you by the World Wide Web Consortium (better known as the W3C). It has the awkward name of XML, which kind of stands for "Extensible Markup Language" if you ignore the first letter of the first word. Atypically for most cute acronyms, everyone pronounces all three letters of XML, although a few folks have been heard to call it "zimmle."

XML has the potential for being the Rosetta Stone of content on the Web. It lets developers describe what they are doing in their content, and to reuse the descriptions that others have used. For a typical example, XML might be quite useful in converting a database to another format. XML describes the format of the data, so if the second format is also defined in XML, the conversion can go much more smoothly than typical conversions.

Avoiding The Crush Of Hype

When a new technology comes into the market, the inventors often portray it as the savior of the suffering and liberator of the chained. To its credit, the W3C has avoided overselling XML, while making it clear that XML can be used in a variety of areas and has the potential for making data interchange much easier.

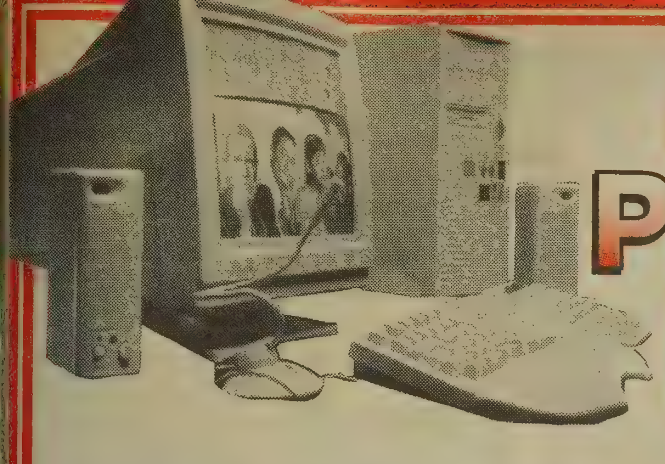
The W3C is showcasing the value of XML by using it in most of their new technologies, which has gotten the attention of many developers. Unfortunately, some of the computer press has started touting XML as a universal language, which it is not, and saying that the Web will rapidly switch from HTML to XML, which is simply silly.

To be clear, XML is not really a language: it is what computer science folks call a "meta-language," i.e. a language in which you can write other languages. This is why XML is so powerful: You can use it to describe the markup you used in any kind of data document, regardless of whether that document is a typical database, a Web page, a book, a collection of music, and so on.

Today, all these document types have descriptions that are readable by programmers, but not computers. Using a meta-language allows developers to describe exactly the format of their document in a computer-readable form. It is very likely that industries will start describing their common document forms in XML, so that XML-enabled programs will be able to pull out information from the documents even if the programs had never seen that kind of document before. For instance, an address book program could take a music collection and grab at least the artists' names, even if it doesn't know anything about how to handle the music itself.

XML Could Be The Next Java

It is a bit like saying that "the Web could be the next TV," but XML is easy enough and useful enough to possibly become the Next Big Thing in the programming world. In fact, many people have started saying that XML could overtake Java in popularity because of all the nasty fighting, including protracted lawsuits, between Sun and Microsoft over who has the "purest" Java. XML, on the other hand, was developed by a somewhat neutral trade association with a large membership, and no one other than the W3C "owns" XML (to the point where they own the trademark on the name XML).



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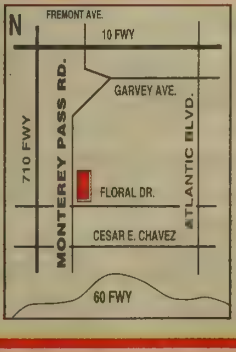

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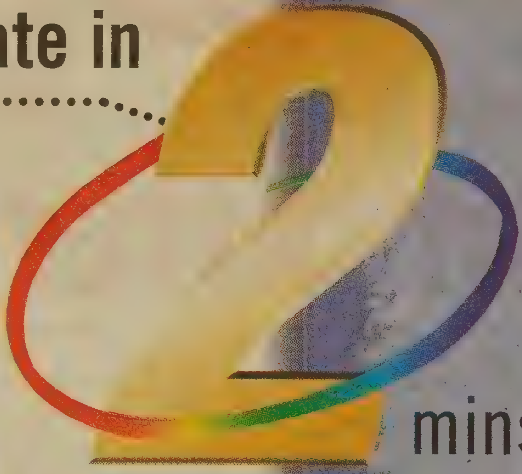

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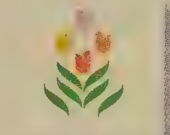

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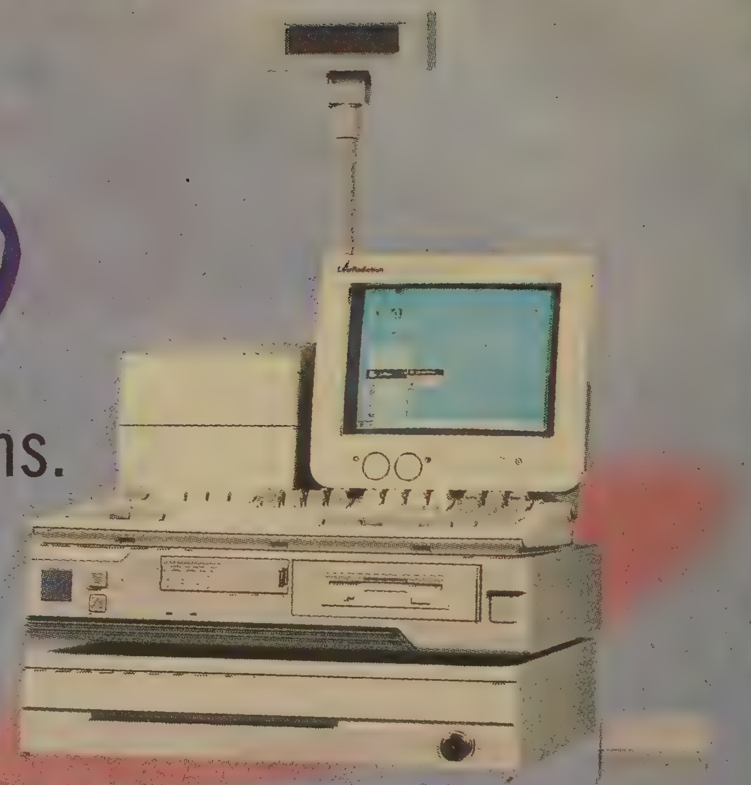

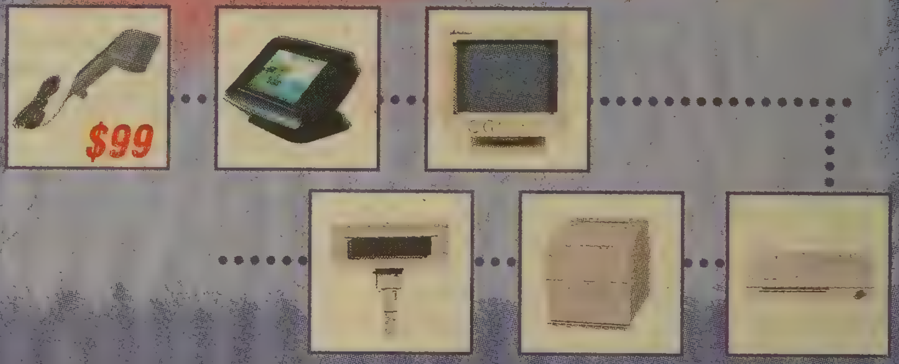

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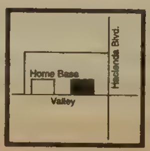

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Java is currently going through a phase where many people in the Java community are wondering when all the promised results will arrive. XML, being near the beginning of its life, is still mostly promise. However, since XML is a format and not a language, there are already many XML tools available, and many languages already have XML schemas (as they're called) for them. Now that Java developers have seen how protective Sun has been of Java, they are less than thrilled when every major Java development is late. XML's development is giving it many advantages that Java never had.

The fact that XML is so closely linked to the Web has certainly helped get it publicity. Java's initial publicity was also linked to the Web, with it's "write once, run anywhere" theme that turned out to be more of a wish than a promise. XML can really "run anywhere" because it doesn't have anything to do with the underlying operating system, or even the links over which the data travels.

> *Using XML instead of HTML will mean that text really appears where you want it, that every feature you want you can get, and that links are much more useful than HTML's links.*

Because the fragmentation of the Web seems reasonably permanent, XML could become the most popular way to bridge the islands. Of course, documents move just as easily through email as they do on the Web, and XML will have as big an impact in your inbox as it does in your Web browsing.

Even though XML itself is new, it actually comes from another meta-language that has a long history: SGML. Although few people have ever heard of SGML, the SGML community has been around for over a decade, and there are plenty of people who have worked long and hard on it, so they know which parts work and which parts don't. XML's developers took this list and pared out most of the parts that didn't work. The result was a meta-language that is much easier to use, and is only a little less robust than full SGML. Interestingly, most people in the SGML world have embraced XML instead of disparaging it as "less than SGML."

Where XML Will Take The Internet

Early XML developers are already taking the language and running with it. The first big change Web and email users will probably see, maybe within a year, is that there will be more document types available to Web and mail clients without clunky "plug-ins" or other methods for display. Microsoft and Netscape will probably both include XML parsers in their browsers, and this means that new document types that have associated XML schemas might be able to be displayed directly.

This is not to say that HTML is going away any time soon. Even though most content providers are dying for something better, until there are lots of browsers that support XML, HTML will still thrive. However, once XML catches on, no one in their right mind will continue to code in HTML.

continued on page 26

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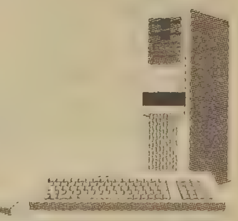

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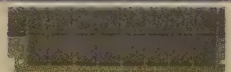

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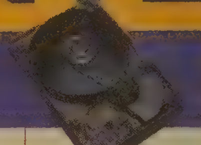

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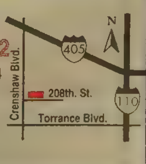

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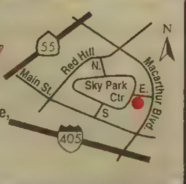

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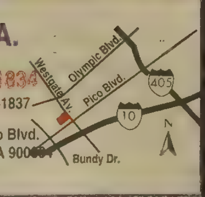

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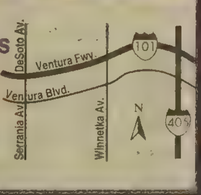

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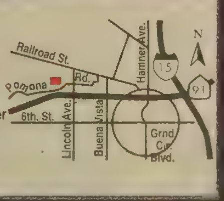

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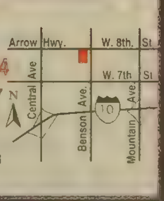

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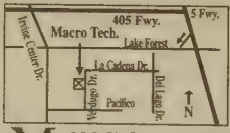

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Instead, they'll define their own document types in XML (or borrow some well-known schemas) and use them instead. Using XML instead of HTML will mean that text really appears where you want it, that every feature you want you can get, and that links are much more useful than HTML's links.

Fortunately, by the time that the popular browsers support XML, there will be plenty of HTML-to-XML translators. XML's designers were careful to make XML look enough like HTML that someone who knows HTML will not have to learn a completely new set of concepts in order to create XML pages. It will be more like switching from WordPerfect to Word. Today's HTML editing tools will be easy to convert to XML, and because XML gives you better layout options, these editors will probably mostly push users towards outputting XML.

If all XML did was completely replace HTML with a more flexible and useful tool, it would be enough. However, text layout is just the beginning for XML. Its real strength is in giving underlying information a structure that different kinds of programs can get at. When you look at it this way, converting HTML text to XML lets a display program not only show the text the way the creator wanted, it lets the program understand some of the semantics of what is being said, such as "this is a name" or "this is an important picture."

The information we handle, and therefore the information being passed around on the Web, is much more than just text, however. Databases have structure. Books have structure. This magazine has structure, and even the ads in this magazine have structure. If those structures were easy to handle by a variety of programs, we could use information much better. This is the real promise of XML.

Imagine being able to look at an Internet-based copy of an issue of this magazine and perform a search for every advertisement that includes a particular modem at a particular price. That's a pipe dream today, but if the magazine was structured so that your browser knew what was and was not an ad, and that within each ad there was enough structure so you can tell what parts were products and what parts were the associated prices, it would be easy. XML makes this kind of structuring fairly easy.

Java is currently going through a phase where many people in the Java community are wondering when all the promised results will arrive. XML, being near the beginning of its life, is still mostly promise.

Of course, this will all only happen if XML tools appear. That seems pretty likely, however, since there are already so many HTML tools, and because there are lots of little-known SGML tools as well. This year will be the year of "XML everywhere" pronouncements, plus some beginning appearances. Next year, the reality will hit, and as long as people don't expect the sun and moon from XML, but instead expect the sun and moon to be structured, XML may overcome the Java curse and give us all more useful documents. ◆

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MicroTimes Stock Indexes Heads Sharply Lower

EXCH	COMPANY	TICKER SYMBOL	CLOSING PRICE 04/30/98	CLOSING PRICE 05/29/98	NET CHANGE IN PERIOD	PERCENT CHANGE IN PERIOD	P/E RATIO	ANNUAL DIVIDEND RATE	ANNUAL DIVIDEND YIELD	ANNUAL HIGH	ANNUAL LOW
	SOFTWARE										
NAS	Adobe	ADBE	50.06	39.94	-10.13	-20.22	18	0.20	0.50	53.13	33.50
NAS	Autodesk	ADSK	47.00	42.50	-4.50	-9.57	21	0.20	0.47	51.13	30.50
NAS	Borland	BORL	10.00	8.31	-1.69	11.50	-	0.00	0.00	12.19	5.88
NAS	Brøderbund (L)	BROD	17.88	16.00	-1.88	-2.05	-	0.00	0.00	37.75	16.00
NAS	Informix	IFMX	9.88	6.81	-3.06	16.18	-	0,00	0.00	12.44	4.00
NAS	Macromedia (H)	MACR	14.94	15.84	0.91	0.42	-	0.00	0.00	17.25	7.13
NAS	Microsoft	MSFT	90.13	84.81	-5.31	0.70	54	0.00	0.00	99.13	58.75
NAS	Novell (H)	NOVL	10.00	10.50	0.50	-6.71	-	0.00	0.00	11.88	6.28
NAS	Oracle	ORCL	25.88	23.63	-2.25	-18.02	31	0.00	0.00	42.13	17.75
NAS	Symantec (H)	SYMC	29.00	23.88	-5.13	7.66	17	0.00	0.00	32.63	17.38
	HARDWARE										
NAS	Apple (H)	AAPL	27.38	26.63	-0.75	-2.74	-	0.00	0.00	31.63	12.75
NYS	Compaq	CPQ	28.06	27.38	-0.69	-2.45	29	0.10	0.37	39.75	19.13
NYS	Digital Equipment	DEC	55.75	55.13	-0.63	-1.12	16	0.00	0.00	62.63	33.75
NAS	Dell (H)	DELL	80.75	82.41	1.66	2.05	57	0.00	0.00	98.50	24.88
NYS	Gateway 2000 (H)	GTW	58.81	45.06	-13.75	-23.38	60	0.00	0.00	59.25	25.06
NYS	Hewlett-Packard (H)	HWP	75.38	62.31	-13.06	-17.33	22	0.60	0.96	82.38	50.13
NYS	IBM (H)	IBM	115.88	117.50	1.63	1.40	20	0.90	0.77	129.31	81.75
NYS	Silicon Graphics	SGI	13.06	12.00	-1.06	-8.13	-	0.00	0.00	30.31	10.94
NAS	Sun Microsystems	SUNW	41.19	40.06	-1.13	-2.73	22	0.00	0.00	53.31	30.38
NYS	Tandy	TAN	49.75	44.25	-5.50	-11.06	25	0.40	0.90	53.25	26.13
NYS	Xerox (H)	XRX	113.50	102.88	-10.63	-9.36	28	1.40	1.36	115.00	65.50
	CPUs										
NYS	Advanced Micro Devices	AMD	27.75	19.56	-8.19	-29.50	-	0.00	0.00	43.63	17.13
NYS	Cypress Semiconductor	CY	10.00	8.56	-1.44	-14.38	-	0.00	0.00	18.94	7.38
NAS	Intel	INTC	80.81	71.44	-9.38	-11.60	20	0.10	0.14	102.00	67.38
NYS	LSI Logic	LSI	27.13	21.31	-5.81	-21.43	20	0.00	0.00	46.88	18.63
NYS	Motorola	MOT	55.75	53.00	-2.75	-4.93	31	0.50	0.94	90.50	52.00
	COMMUNICATIONS										
NAS	3Com (L)	COMS	34.25	25.38	-8.88	-25.91	41	0.00	0.00	59.69	25.38
NYS	AT&T	T	60.13	60.88	0.75	1.25	21	1.30	2.14	68.50	34.00
NYS	BellSouth Corp. (H)	BLS	64.19	64.50	0.31	0.49	19	1.40	2.17	69.38	43.31
NAS	Cisco (H)	CSCO	73.25	75.63	2.38	3.24	80	0.00	0.00	81.50	41.69
NAS	MCI (H)	MCIC	50.31	53.47	3.16	6.27	255	0.10	0.19	54.19	27.31
NYS	Northern Telecom (H)	NT	60.88	64.00	3.13	5.13	52	0.30	0.47	69.25	39.69
	INTERNET										
NAS	EarthLink	ELNK	70.94	54.50	-16.44	-23.17	-	0.00	0.00	77.00	10.00
NAS	Netscape	NSCP	27.31	24.50	-2.81	-10.30	-	0.00	0.00	49.50	14.88
NAS	Yahoo	YHOO	118.94	109.50	-9.44	-7.93	-	0.00	0.00	129.63	20.63
	MEDIA										
NYS	Disney (H)	DIS	124.56	113.25	-11.31	-9.08	36	0.60	0.53	128.38	73.81
NAS	TCI (H)	TCOMA	32.25	34.31	2.06	6.40	-	0.00	0.00	36.69	14.13

KEY: NYS=NEW YORK ASE=AMERICAN NAS=NASDAQ
(H)=NEW HIGH REACHED IN PERIOD (L)=NEW LOW REACHED IN PERIOD

MARKET DIARY:

ADVANCES	10
DECLINES	27
UNCHANGED	0
NEW HIGHS	15
NEW LOWS	2

MOST ACTIVE ISSUES:

LARGEST DOLLAR GAINER	MCI	$ 3.16
LARGEST DOLLAR LOSER	Earth Link	$ -16.44
LARGEST PERCENTAGE GAINER	TCI	6.40 %
LARGEST PERCENTAGE LOSER	Informix	-31.01 %

	CLOSE 04/30/98	CLOSE 05/29/98	NET CHANGE IN PERIOD	PERCENT CHANGE IN PERIOD
MICROTIMES STOCK INDEX	12934.83	12300.89	-633.95	-4.90
DOW JONES INDUSTRIAL AVERAGE	9063.37	8899.95	-163.42	-1.80
STANDARD & POOR'S 500 INDEX	1111.77	1090.82	-20.95	-1.88
N.Y.S.E. COMPOSITE	577.37	565.28	-12.09	-2.09
NASDAQ COMPOSITE	1868.41	1778.87	-89.54	-4.79

CLOSING QUOTES FOR GRAPH:

DATE	MICRO TIMES	DOW JONES
10/16/97	10985.85	7938.88
12/10/97	10922.72	7978.79
01/14/98	10813.50	7784.69
02/05/98	11808.05	8117.25
03/05/98	11573.81	8445.08
03/31/98	12466.06	8799.81
04/30/98	12934.83	9063.37
05/29/98	12300.89	8899.95

Source: Nordby International Inc. (*www.nordby.com*), Boulder, CO.
This information is based on sources believed to be reliable, and while extensive efforts are made to assure its accuracy, no guarantees can be made. Nordby International assumes no liability for any inaccuracies. For information on Nordby's customized financial research services, call (303)938-1877.

The national indices headed south last month, as several factors contributed to the period's poor performance. The national indices were hampered last month by the possibility of an interest rate increase, re-emerging Asian jitters, and reports that several companies would report weaker than expected earnings. The Dow Jones Industrial Average retreated 163.42 points, or -1.80%, to close at 8899.95. In similar fashion, the S&P 500 slide 20.95 points, or -1.88%, to a monthly close of 1090.82.

The *MicroTimes* Stock Index followed the national indices southerly trek, reversing last month's strong performance. Our index slipped -4.90%, or 633.95 points, to close the monthly trading period at 12300.89. In our index, declining issues outpaced advancers by a 27-to-10 count, and fifteen companies reached annual highs versus two that fell to a 52-week low.

Turning To Stocks In The Accompanying Table

IBM turned in a strong month, after CEO Louis Gerstner told analysts to expect double-digit revenue growth in the next several years despite the computer company's recently reported lower-than-expected revenue growth. Shares of the company jumped 1.40%, or $1.63 per share, to a closing price of $117.50 on the announcement. IBM's stock also rode the wave of a rating increase last month, after Bear Stearns raised its rating on the company to "buy" from "attractive."

Shares of Novell moved higher after the company posted strong second quarter financial results. During the monthly trading session, Novell watched its stock increase 5.00% to a closing price of $10.50 per share. The company reported revenue of $262 million for its second fiscal quarter ended April 30, 1998, compared with $252 million in the first quarter of 1998. Second quarter net income was $19 million, up $5 million from the first quarter of 1998, and earnings on a diluted basis were $0.05 per share. "Novell's recovery plan is working," said Dr. Eric Schmidt, chairman and CEO of Novell.

EarthLink Network's stock plummeted after the company's stock was downgraded. Shares of EarthLink fell -23.17%, or $16.44 per share, to a closing price of $54.50. EVEREN Securities reported that it lowered its rating on shares of the company to IT Market Perform from IT Outperform. ◆

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intel

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EtherExpress PRO/10 PCI Combo Card Only	79
EtherExpress PRO 10/100 EISA Card	289
EtherExpress 16 MCA MicroChannel 32 Bit	189

intel EtherExpress PRO PCI 10/100 + PILA8460 (NEW Model !!) $55 ea.

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i.Share V2.5 3 Session / 32 Session	78 /198
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NOVELL

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Novell 3.2 or 4.11	25/ 50 Users	2395/ 3295
Novell 3.2 or 4.11	100/ 250 Users	4695/12999
NetWare v4.1 Add-On	10/ 25 Users	1099 / 2299
NetWare v4.1 Add-On	50/ 100 Users	3399 / 4899
Netware 3.2 Enhanced Pack (Form 3.12)		289 (Cash)

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FAXServer For Win NT Server Only	239
FAXServer V5.0 Win NT 5 Users/ 25 Users	299/ 999

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CASTELLE

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Pipeline 130 w/1 DDSW56 & 1 Switch 56	$1395
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Cisco 765 Enet / ISDN & 2 Pots	$ 659
Cisco 766 ISDN BRI / NT 1 & 2 Pots	$ 699
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NETWORK INTERNET ROUTER

Farallon

Netopia ISDN Internet Router 29 User TCP/IP	595
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Netopia ISDN Internet Router w/AppleTalk & Smartip Unltd User	1045
Netopia Lease TI, TI/TI, IP/IPX Router	1045
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IBM 4.3 GB 6.4GB/ 8.4 GB	189 229/ 299
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adaptec

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AHA- 2940U2W Kit PCI Ultra 2 Wide SCSI Kit	479
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AHA- 3940UW Mac Kit PCI UW Dual Channel	539
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3COM PCMCIA 10/100 TP (CardBus-32 Bit)	148
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Acelink PCMCIA 10 TP & Coax Combo	79
intel PCMCIA 10/100TP (16 -Bit)	148
intel PCMCIA 10/100TP (32 Bit)	158
intel PCMCIA 10/100TP + 56K	3[illegible]
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Xircom PCMCIA 33.6K Fax Modem	158
Xircom PCMCIA 56K Fax Modem	168
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Xircom PCMCIA 10 TP + 33.6K	228
Xircom PCMCIA 10 TP & Coax + 33.6 K	258
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Xircom PCMCIA 10/100TP (CardBus)	158
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Pentium II - 300 MMX	$ 1299
Pentium II - 333 MMX	$ 1459

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[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible] SVGA w/4MB	[illegible]
SVGA Monitor [illegible]	[illegible]

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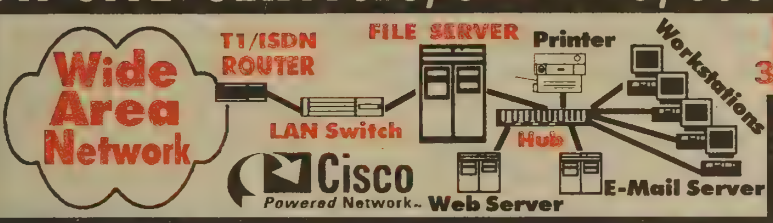

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intel Create & Share Camera w /SW (USB Port)	$[illegible]
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Kodak DVC323 Digital Video Camera (USB Port)	$[illegible]

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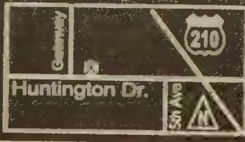

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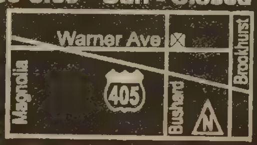

Letters

High-Tech Jobs: The Voice Of Experience

Thank you so much for the article "High-Tech Workers: What Shortage?" [*www.microtimes.com/178/olderworkers.html*]

It is high time that somebody articulated what we older workers have long realized, namely, that there is absolutely nothing that justifies putting many of us "out to pasture" merely because of our age, other than the fact that we (typically) have achieved a level of benefits, greater than new hires, through diligence.

Certainly, if there is a problem which causes intellectual failure, there can be some justification. However, bringing in more foreign workers when there are many US citizens unemployed in the same disciplines is unconscionable, and bespeaks a crass determination to increase the bottom line by rate busting.

—*Jim Coppock*

Sorry State Of Tech Support, Revisited

Paul Hoffman's column [*www.microtimes.com/178/insights.html*] and many others like it are present every time I open a computer magazine. These columns are coming to the party late, but they finally came.

Mr. Hoffman accurately describes the problem, as I experience it, of buggy software and getting help for it. It pleases me that Mr. Hoffman used the "S" word, as in "Selling buggy software is stealing from the customer."

The only issue he did not describe accurately is the amount of rage I feel toward vendors who sell me buggy software.

—*Tom Rubens*

Not A Friend Of Bill

First we were told, "What's good for Standard Oil is good for America." Next we were told, "What's good for General Motors is good for America." Now we are being told, "What's good for Microsoft is good for America."

This latest propaganda line is from the whiner-baby monopolist Bill Gates. Recently in an attempt to head off further investigations of Microsoft Corporation, he claimed that any delay in the release of his latest top-heavy software monstrosity, Windows 98, would damage the US economy. I guess in his eyes, the world does revolve around Redmond, Washington.

Does anyone have a serious need for another overblown, top-heavy, updated version of Windows 95? I doubt it. Windows 95 has over 15,000,000 lines of computer code in it. It is a memory hog; it is very unstable and it has a very awkward graphical interface to boot. (And you will have to boot and reboot and reboot again).

And what is this supposed "foreign competition" that Mr. Gates speaks of so darkly? The only "foreign" operating system that I can think of is Linux, the shareware variant of UNIX, which was created by Linus Torvalds of Finland. Linux is now in the public domain as shareware.

I suppose the real threat of the Linux operating system is that it is not greed-based proprietary, licensed software, unlike Windows, owned by the Microsoft Corporation. I guess that the concept of "sharing" is truly foreign to Mr. Gates.

I believe that it is breakup time for Microsoft. They are too big and too pushy for us to continue to allow them to dominate the growing world of Personal Computers and the Web/Internet.

—*James K. Sayre*

For more on this theme, see articles by Mitch Kapor and Jonathan E. in this issue.

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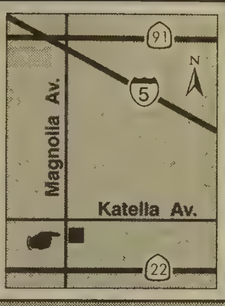

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- Seagate Cheetah 4.5GB 5.2ms Ultra2 Wide SCSI-2
- Toshiba 32X CD-ROM Drive
- Creative Lab AWE64 PCI Sound Card
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- Plextor 14/32X SCSI CD-ROM Drive
- Matrox G100 8MB SGRAM Video Card
- 1 Parallel Port, 2 Serial Ports
- 4 x PCI Bus, 2 x ISA Bus, 1 AGP Slots
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- 512MB 10ns PC100 SDRAM expandable to 1GB
- NEC 1.44" 3.5" Diskette Drive
- Mylex 960 Ultra Wide 3 Channel RAID Controller
- 3x Seagate Cheetah 18.2GB 5.7ms Ultra2 Wide SCSI-2
- Plextor 14/32X SCSI CD-ROM Drive
- Matrox G100 8MB SGRAM Video Card
- 1 Parallel Port, 2 Serial Ports
- 4 x PCI Bus, 2 x ISA Bus, 1 AGP Slots
- Microsoft 104-key Natural Keyboard
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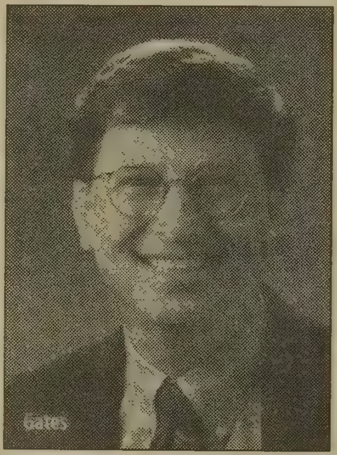
High-Tech Hypocrisy About Government

Taking On Microsoft

By Mitchell Kapor

> With Microsoft's dominance, vast areas of the product market are barren zones where venture capitalists and entrepreneurs fear to tread because Microsoft has staked a claim or is seen as likely to do so.

In the mid-1980s, during my tenure at Lotus, I was, I believe, the first person to publicly compare Microsoft to Standard Oil. Both companies sought and used monopoly control over a new industry critical to the nation's economy. And both were headed by men—John D. Rockefeller Sr. and Bill Gates—who would stop at virtually nothing to gain what they sought. Back then no one took the comparison seriously—except Bill Gates himself, who made it clear to me how irate he was about it.



Like Gates, I believe in and have profited from the free market. But I'm also a techno-realist, which means that unlike many of my colleagues in the high-tech industry, I don't automatically see Government as the enemy of technological progress. Such views are all too fashionable in Silicon Valley, where the prospect of Government intervention causes a bad case of heartburn.

What my colleagues need to see is that the market cannot work unless our society sets rules of play and enforces them. Microsoft has benefited from the stability and opportunities provided by those rules, but it has been flouting them as well. The antitrust suits filed last week against Microsoft are therefore regrettable but necessary.

Despite all of Gates' talk about the right to innovate, his company uses its power to limit consumer choice and impede a free marketplace. Only the Government has the ability to take on Microsoft, and the Justice Department's antitrust chief, Joel Klein, has done his homework. He's a pragmatist, not a crusader.

Klein understands that the real threat to entrepreneurial innovation is Microsoft's anticompetitive arrogance. Great discoveries in computing often come from small startup companies. Yet with Microsoft's dominance, vast areas of the product market—including but hardly limited to basic applications like word processors and spreadsheets—are barren zones where venture capitalists and entrepreneurs fear to tread because Microsoft has staked a claim or is seen as likely to do so. It is a sad but telling fact that in the high-tech field, virtually no business plan will be financed today without a convincing answer to the question of what is to be done about competition from Microsoft.

The Government also recognizes that Microsoft's dominance will only intensify as the Internet becomes an integral part of mainstream culture. The browser war is just the beginning. Microsoft claims *droit du seigneur* in any area of computing that becomes strategically important—voice recognition, home appliances, auto navigation and so on.

It's unfortunate that Microsoft is so aggressively self-interested that an external check is necessary. I would prefer to live in and help create a society in which self-regulation makes antitrust suits unnecessary. But until such a business ethos prevails, we must rely on other means.

Ultimately, the extent of the Government-mandated reform may depend on Microsoft's willingness to begin acting like a more socially responsible industry leader. To the extent that the company remains recalcitrant, it's likely that radical solutions will gain favor.

The most drastic action, of course, would be to break Microsoft up into a series of Baby Bills, separating operating systems from applications and from content and services. Today that seems like overkill, but in the coming years, short of a sincere change of heart by Gates, it may well become the preferred solution. ◆

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A Cell Phone For Email And Scheduling

AT&T PocketNet Service Lets You Check Your Email—And Lots More—On A Cell Phone

By Ed Kahn

If all I want to do is read and respond to the most important messages in my email, the smaller the device, the better as far as I am concerned.

As time goes by, we have become increasingly dependent upon our email. When I am out of town, I need a way to check on my electronic mail at least once a day. Not too long ago, I routinely carried a portable computer for just this purpose. In the last year, several smaller computers have been introduced that greatly simplify keeping in touch.

If I plan to do serious work on a computer when I am on-the-road, there is no substitute for a notebook computer. But if all I want to do is read and respond to the most important messages in my email, the smaller the device, the better as far as I am concerned. AT&T recently introduced AT&T PocketNet Service, which lets you check your email—and lots more—on a cell phone. For this service, which costs $29.99 per month, AT&T does not actually make the phones that support the service.

Currently, there are two cell phones that support the PocketNet Service: the Samsung Duetté ($299) and the Mitsubishi MobileAccess 120 ($299). (Both are available through AT&T.) Although I tested the Mitsubishi model, they offer nearly identical features. Both phones provide cell phone service through any provider you choose. The purpose of this review is not to discuss the cell phones aside from indicating that the model I tested worked as expected. The purpose of this review is to discuss this service as an alternative to a portable computer when you are on-the-go, but don't really need all of the features or weight of a laptop computer.

These tiny phones are powerhouses. They truly illustrate the varied power of computer chips, for these phones allow you to send and receive email, check phone numbers around the country, read news from ABC, see sports information from ESPN, check on your personal calendar, enter the information for phone calls you need to make for the day and then automatically dial the numbers, print out messages you receive, find directions from where you are to where you want to go, and the list goes on and on. In short, while you don't have access to the Web, you do have access to lots of information found on popular Web sites.

When you subscribe to the PocketNet Service, you will get an email address and password to access a Web site from your desktop or laptop computer. This allows you to enter information onto your personal Web site, which you can then access from your cell phone. You can also enter data from the cell phone that will be available from your desktop computer after a simple synchronization. This means you can keep a calendar on your desktop computer and review it from the cell phone.

While all of this is convenient, the standard PocketNet Service does not let you download your address and contact files onto the Web site. But AT&T has worked out an arrangement with Puma Technology. Puma publishes Intellisync software ($69.99) for the AT&T PocketNet Service. What this software does is perfectly synchronize the most popular PIMs (Personal Information Managers) with the PocketNet Service. This means if you use Microsoft Schedule or Microsoft Outlook, Lotus Organizer, Symantec ACT!, Starfish Sidekick or any of the other popular PIMs, you can effortlessly synchronize these program with PocketNet. This effectively extends your PIM into the field. You can check your schedule, access phone numbers and addresses, and consult to-do lists and such from your cell phone.

The phone itself is quite sophisticated and is already set up for both voice phone service and data service. You can receive a phone call while you are transmitting data. Whatever you are doing, there are extensive menus that let you move quickly from function to function. When you are in data mode, you can easily navigate from place to place. While gobs of information

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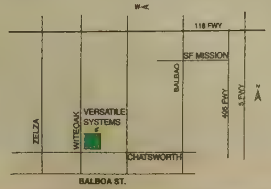

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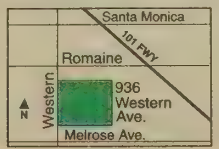

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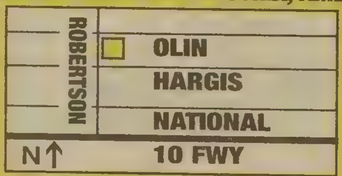

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are available to you through the phone, the phone itself stores little more than an index that points to the right place on the Internet. The bookmark feature lets you mark any place that you want to use often.

Not surprisingly, the screen on the phone is actually quite small, measuring approx. 1" x 1.75." You might be wondering, "How you can read an email message on this tiny screen?" When you log on to check your email you are given a menu of new messages. To read a message, you scroll through it, which can be cumbersome. If message is from someone who knows you will be reading it through this service, they can embed up to six responses. In that way, all you need to do to reply is check one of the six responses. When you get a long message, you can fax it to any nearby fax machine with the push of a few buttons. Alternatively, you can forward the message to someone else or to your other email account. Likewise, you can easily have email sent to your regular email address forwarded to your PocketNet Service email address.

There are obviously a number of limitations to this service, but it points the way to a closer integration between desktop, laptop, and cellular computers. I found it quite convenient for getting a general idea of what was happening back at the office, but not for conducting extensive business through email. Sending messages is quite cumbersome. You "type" the messages using the telephone number pad. For "A" you press the 2 key once. For "B" you press the key twice and so on through the alphabet. Yes, it gets the job done, but makes you think long and hard about ways to condense the message.

This is an extremely powerful tool and despite its limitations, it will appeal to people who are in the field a lot and don't want to carry along a second computer. The cell phone will let you take care of important jobs in the field and leave the rest until you are back at a larger display and keyboard.

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Computer of the Month

The IBM ThinkPad 600

These days, a new notebook computer from IBM is something to look forward to because they always incorporate a few new features that I haven't seen before. The newest ThinkPad 600 is a delight—it is sleek, lightweight, powerful, and features an innovative new TrackPoint.

The ThinkPad 600 comes in different configurations, starting at about $2800. I tested the top-of-the-line model, powered by an Intel Pentium II 266MHz Mobile processor. It comes standard with 32MB of SDRAM memory, but can be expanded all the way up to 160MB. The removable hard drive holds 4GB of data. It is 1.4" thick and weighs less than 5lbs. without its CD-ROM or floppy drive. With either of these, it still weighs just over 5lbs.

continued on page 42

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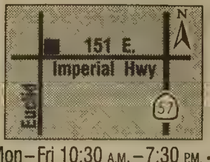

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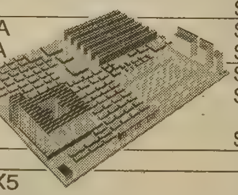

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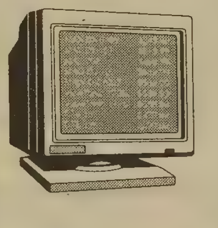

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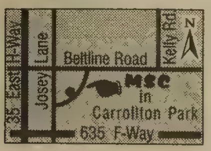

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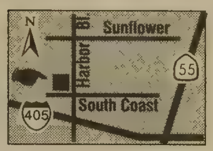

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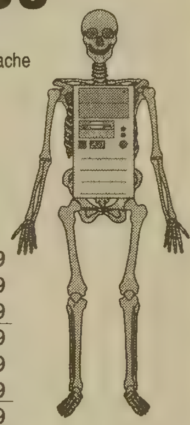

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continued from page 39

As floppy drives become less and less useful, IBM ships the ThinkPad 600 with a 24X CD-ROM drive in its UltraslimBay. This bay holds either the CD-ROM drive or a floppy drive. If you want neither, a weight-saver holder fills the slot and lets you travel light. IBM has wisely designed it so you can attach both the CD-ROM and the floppy drive. The floppy drive fits into a housing that attaches to the side of the computer. If you take the drive out of the housing, it fits in the UltraslimBay.

While the TFT display on the ThinkPad 600 is not the largest on the market, it measures a generous 13.3" diagonally. Both the built-in LCD and an external monitor will display at XGA resolution of up to 1024 x 768. You can see either or both displays.

Although the keyboard is good, it is my one area of complaint. It lacks the Windows 95 keys. These keys let you get to the start menu without having to use the mouse. I find this especially helpful when I am in the middle of an application and my taskbar is hidden. This is the first new computer I have seen in a long time that lacks these keys.

On the other hand, IBM has greatly improved its TrackPoint pointing device. The TrackPoint looks a lot like an eraser head planted in the middle of the keyboard. Push the button and the pointer moves in the direction of your nudge. The harder you push, the faster it flies. Two buttons just underneath the keyboard serve as left and right mouse buttons. There is

continued on page 46

The newest ThinkPad 600 is a delight—it is sleek, lightweight, powerful, and features an innovative new TrackPoint.

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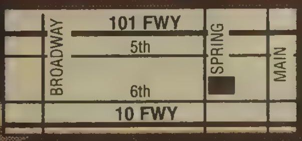

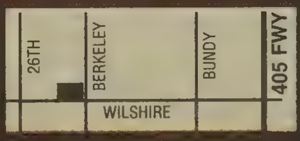

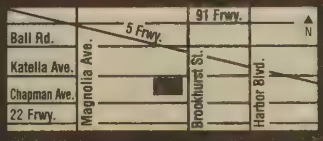

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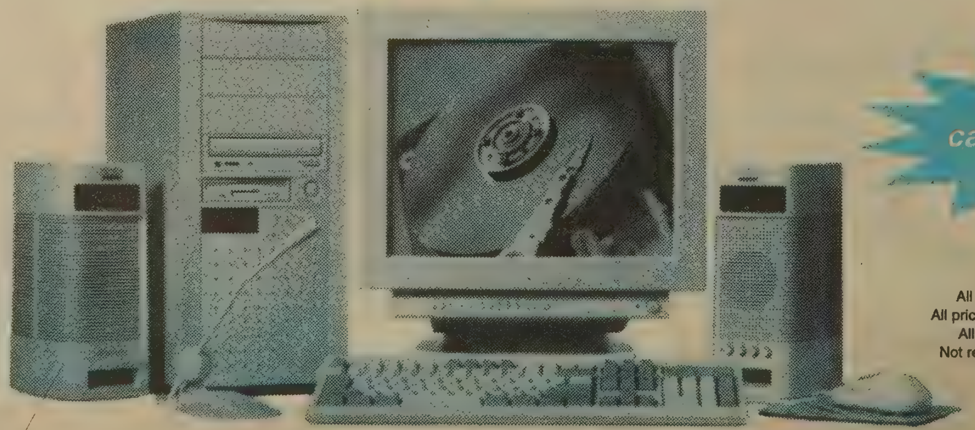

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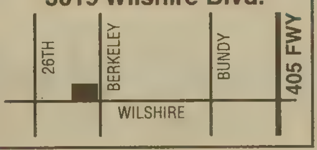

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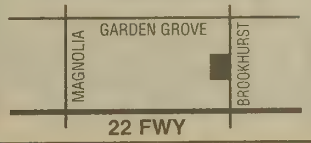

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also a center button. This lets you use the TrackPoint as a scrolling device. This is particularly useful for spreadsheets. By setting the software up differently, you can also use the TrackPoint as a magnifier to zoom in on parts of your display. Finally, you can set the software so that with a tap the TrackPoint works like a mouse button. You have to try this device to appreciate its sophistication.

While the ThinkPad 600 is a pricey notebook computer, it has a lot to offer.

You can also attach an IBM mouse that can be used in conjunction with the TrackPoint. This is a nice arrangement, but you are restricted to using their mouse. Any other mouse works like a mouse, but not in conjunction with the TrackPoint. If you decide to connect an external keyboard, you can do so through the mouse/keyboard port. Unfortunately, you cannot connect both unless you spring for a port replicator ($199). IBM used to sell a simple cable that did this job, but they have discontinued it! Before getting the port replicator, you might consider getting a full docking station ($699) that also gives you two additional PC Card slots, two full-size and one half-size PCI ISA slots and a SCSI-3 interface.

The basic ThinkPad 600 comes with two stacked PC Card slots that will accommodate cards of Type I through Type III. These slots support Zoomed Video and CardBus. Software supports MPEG-1 playback for smooth full screen video. There are a pair of speakers on the top of the computer. Microphone and speaker ports fill out the multimedia capabilities of the ThinkPad 600.

A built-in 56K fax/modem also comes standard. While the modem is as fast as they come these days, I worry that it will be difficult to upgrade when faster models become available. I think PC Card modems are a better solution. In addition to the modem, there is a USB port. With the release of Windows 98, we should begin to see devices using this interface come to market. An infrared port facilitates the transfer of data between similarly equipped systems.

While the ThinkPad 600 is a pricey notebook computer, it has a lot to offer. Various warranty packages are available and you know the company will be around for a while. ◆

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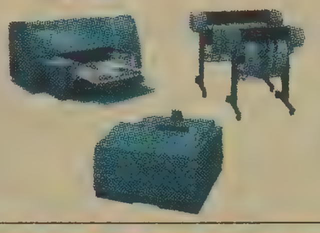

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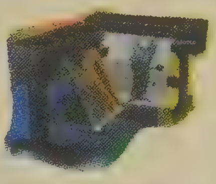

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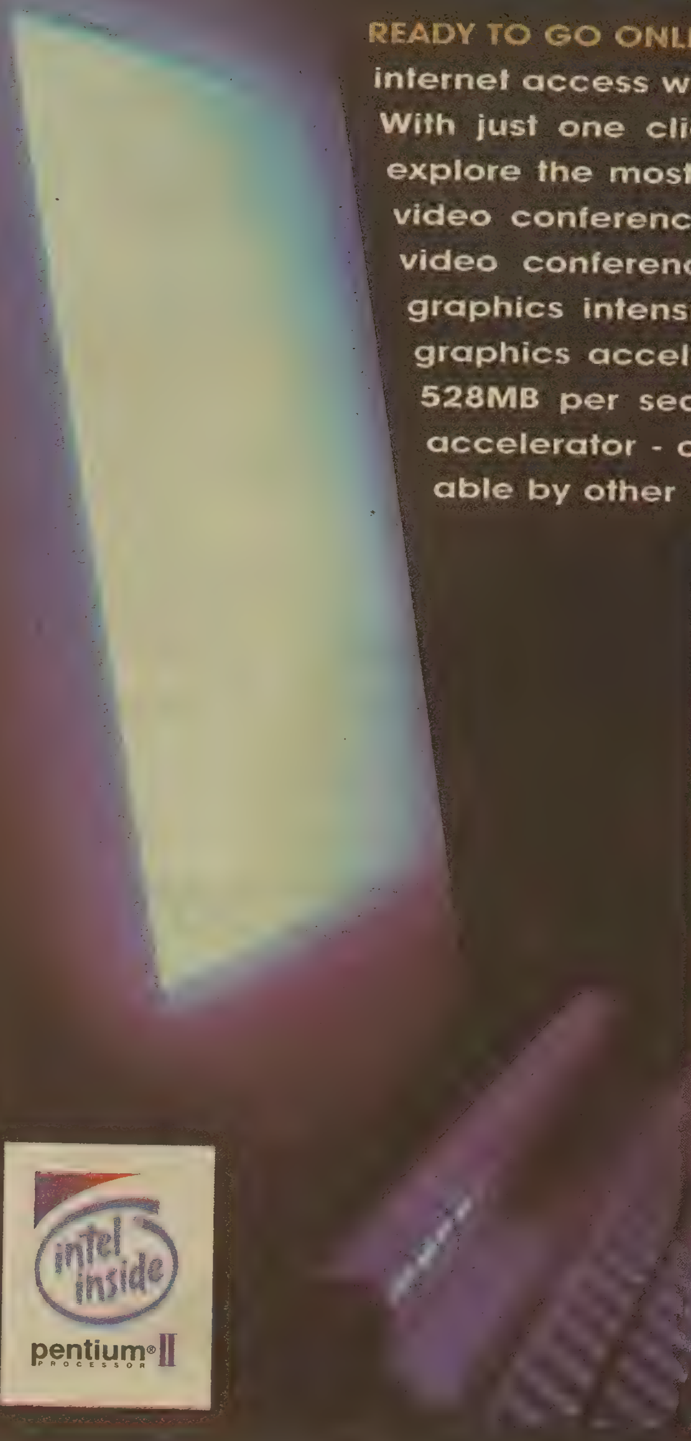

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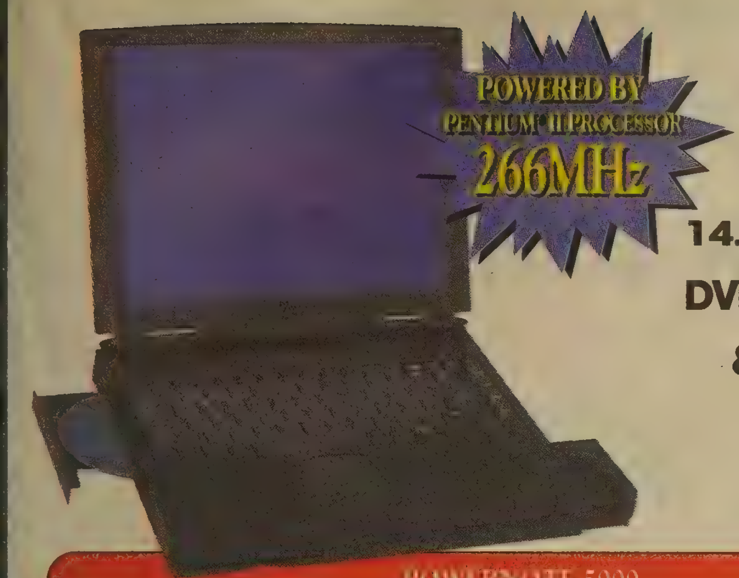

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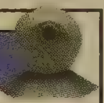

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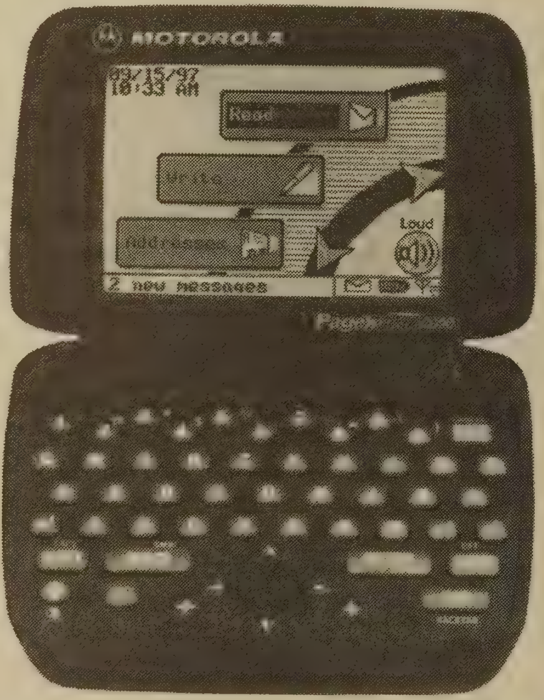
The Motorola PagerWriter 2000—

Versatile Pocket Communicator

By Douglas J. Nakakihara

The LCD screen, which sits opposite the keyboard, is about 1.5" x 2.5" in size, well beyond the size of mere mortal alphanumeric pager and wireless phone displays. It is capable of displaying ten lines of 30 characters, excluding the header and bottom graphical buttons.



I've already got a PalmPilot and a cell phone attached to my waist (using a Case Logic cassette carrier), but I've still been eyeing the alphanumeric pagers for a while. Previously, there seemed to be no (reasonably) compelling reason to lug another gadget around.

Well, Motorola's PageWriter 2000 has quite possibly changed my mind. This two-way pager not only lets you communicate with other pagers, but it also connects you to the whole world via Internet email—inbound and outbound! Plus, using an Internet faxing service, you can also add faxing to the feature list of this cool device.

The PageWriter 2000 operates on a rechargeable NiMH battery and will reportedly give you a full week of uninterrupted usage. Plus, it will recharge on the included plug-in base in only an hour. To conserve battery power, the display will go off after a certain time period. You merely have to tap any button to bring it back to life. All messages will remain even if your battery dies.

The PageWriter 2000 is based on Motorola's FLEX Platform software and is actually more akin to a handheld computer than a pager. (Interestingly enough, the PageWriter 2000 actually uses the same microprocessor, the Motorola MC68328, as the PalmPilot.) It has its own operating system and comes with 1MB of Flash memory, plus 256KB of static RAM for 1.25MB of total memory. You could actually load third-party applications and run them on the pager. (This requires the optional PC docking station to transfer the files.) However, right now there are only a couple of programs available.

The basic unit costs $330 and includes the PageWriter 2000, holster belt-clip, battery, and charger. For $30 more, you get the deluxe kit which replaces the charger with the PC docking station, which will also charge the battery.

Features And Capabilities

You might have seen these units around or advertised on TV. At about 3.5" x 2.75" x 1", they are a little on the large side compared to your run-of-the-mill pager. This bulk is mostly due to the tiny keyboard that sits inside its clamshell-design case.

This is essentially a full QWERTY keyboard, albeit half the size of your standard numeric keypad. Touch typists like myself will find using the keyboard a bit tedious, not only because of its size, but also because each key requires a relatively strong push. I would have preferred buttons requiring a lighter touch. (Of course, those one-finger typists out there might totally disagree with me.)

Another complaint I have about the keyboard is that it lacks a "page down/up" feature, so scrolling through a message requires you to hold the down button. This is a minor complaint, but a nuisance nonetheless.

The LCD screen, which sits opposite the keyboard, is about 1.5" x 2.5" in size, well beyond the size of mere mortal alphanumeric pager and wireless phone displays. It is capable of displaying ten lines of 30 characters, excluding the header and bottom graphical buttons. You also have the option of doubling the font size for five lines of 15 characters. These features make reading messages on the PageWriter 2000 a pleasure.

In fact, the included belt-clip attachment allows you to flip the unit open without removing it, and still easily read the display—really a nice feature. The display is also backlit for low-light viewing.

The interface is menu-driven. You must navigate through "buttons" using the tab key or the four-way rocking directional button. Some keyboard shortcuts allow you to select menu items by pressing the first letter of the item. This makes it much easier to navigate around.

Messages can be organized similarly to the way they are on standard email applications. There is an Inbox, an Outbox, a Draft, and a Sent folder. You can set up custom folders as well, and even define filters for Inboxes. This works by applying up to three independent filters for an Inbox. If the defined words are contained in the message, it is directed to the specified Inbox. Folders can also have independent "clean up" rules which determine when their contents are deleted, if ever.

continued on page 54

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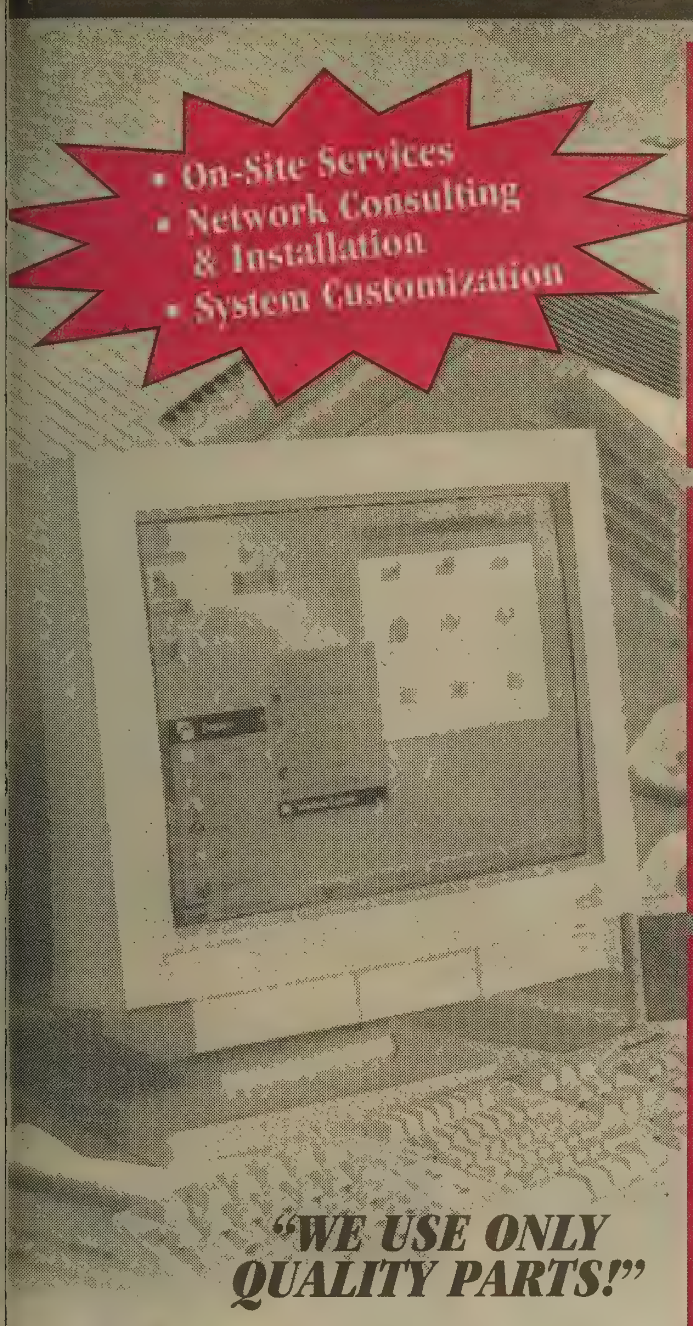

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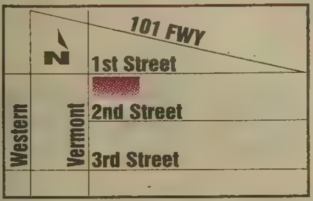

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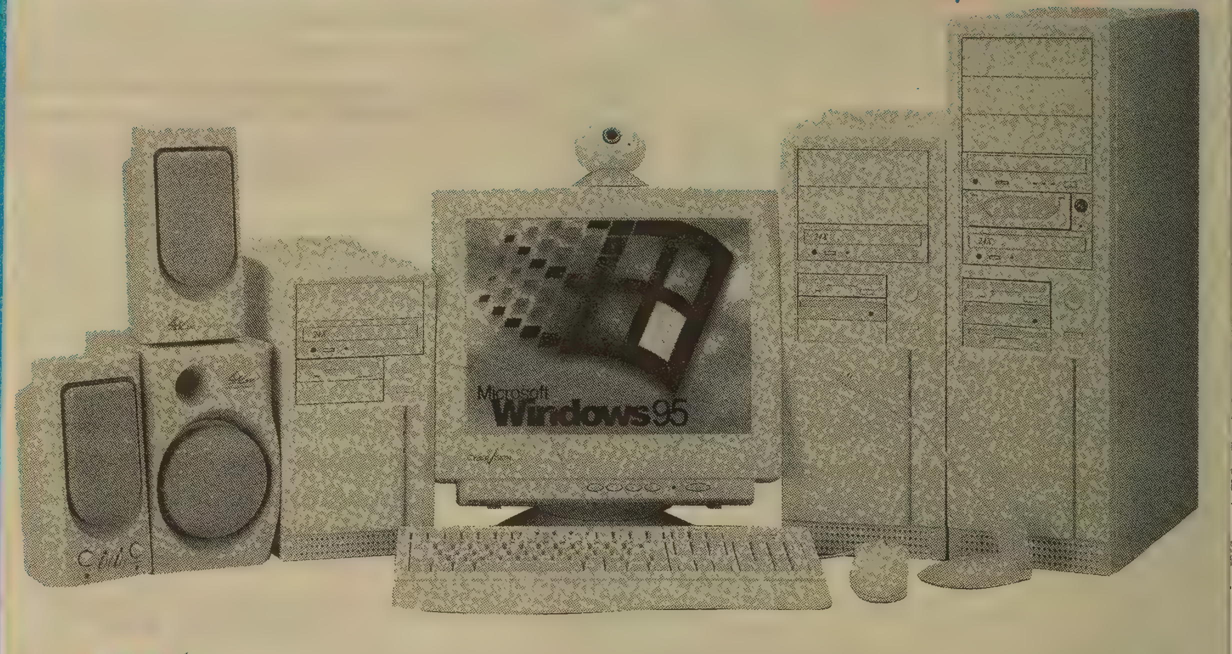

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Not only can the message be stored in a special Inbox, but you can also override the alert method. For example, a message with "BABY-COMING!" in it might be set to always sound an audible alert, even when you have the pager set to vibrate or be silent on incoming messages. This alert override is extremely flexible in that you can have a different setting for each of the possible alert settings: audible, vibrate, or silent.

Communicating

Note that to send a page to another pager, the other pager must also be on the same network (SkyTel, for now). However, since you can also send email to anyone with an email address, this is not as great a limitation as it otherwise would be. There is also an interesting time-saving feature that allows you to send short prefabricated messages as responses, like "yes," "will call later," etc. If you wish, you can set up your own "canned" responses.

People can send you messages using regular Internet email or from the SkyTel Web site. They can also call a toll-free phone number to send you a numeric or text page. The latter will cost you extra, however, and involves talking to an operator. The caller will need to know your PIN, but for a small charge you can have a personal access number set up for you.

I set up a forwarding-rule in Microsoft Outlook that would forward any message to the pager if it was less than 1K. This didn't always work as desired, due to the "invisible" routing attachments on messages and the fact that Outlook didn't always seemed to realize the correct file size.

Of course, you might also want to use this type of setup to forward email from specific people. You'd get either the whole message or at least a truncated portion. Since it would be forwarded, you'd still have a duplicate on your PC. This works great in a situation where you can be connected to the Internet 100% of the time on your desktop PC. It would be more problematic in a dialup environment.

This is a nationwide service, so there are no roaming charges if you travel away from home.

You can also assign an alarm to a message. The software allows you to pick a time and date for it to go off. You have the option of repeating the alarm daily, weekly, monthly, or yearly. I really liked this feature because I am constantly forgetting meetings. By combining an alarmed message with the vibrating ring, it makes the reminder pretty hard to ignore. Moreover, the alarm will sound again and again every minute or so, until you read the message.

The VCR-like alarm setting functions are not the easiest to use, but they get the job done. I prefer the PalmPilot-style interface where you select the date from a graphical calendar.

Recordkeeping

Besides operating as a two-way communications device, you can also store names, phone numbers, physical addresses, email addresses and pager PINs on the PageWriter 2000.

With the optional docking station, you can manage the address book, as well as file and print

continued on page 58

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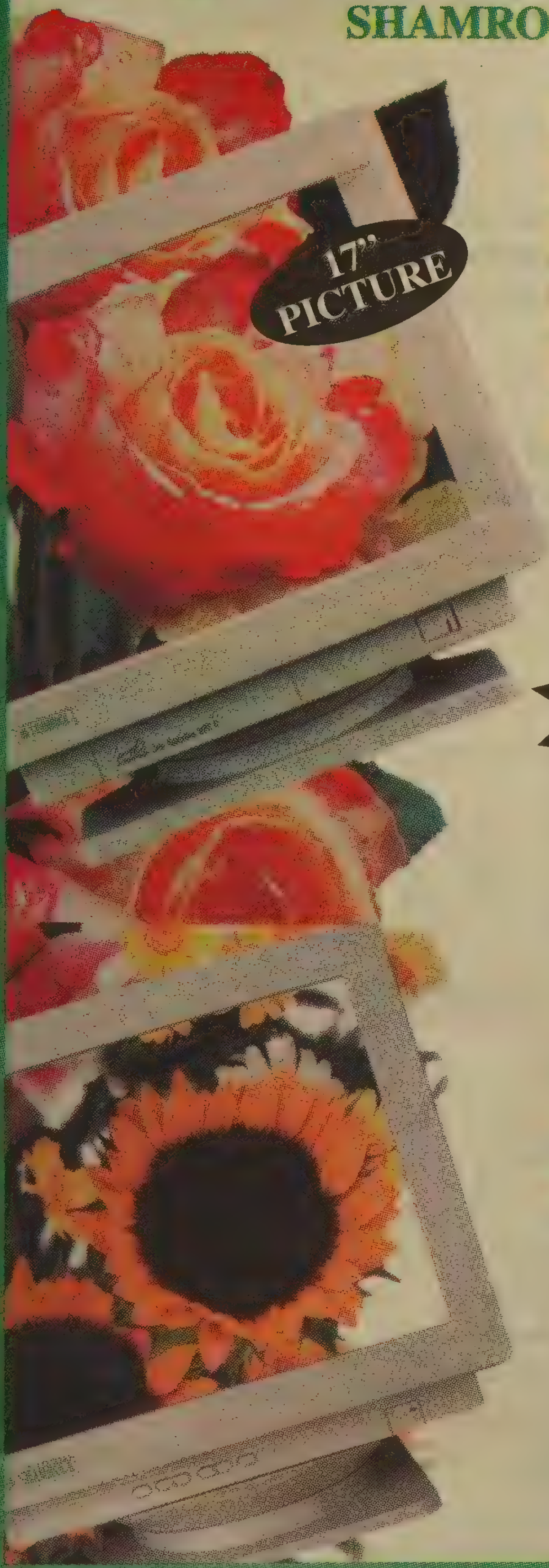

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VIEWABLE SIZE	13.1"	13.8"	13.8"	15.7"	15.7"	16"
DOT PITCH	0.28mm	0.28mm	0.28mm	0.26/0.28mm	0.26mm	0.25mm
HOR FREQUENCY	30-55KHz	30-55KHz	30-69KHz	30-69KHz	30-88KHz	30-88KHz
MAX RESOLUTION	1024x768(68Hz) 800x600(85Hz)	1024x768(68Hz) 800x600(80Hz)	1280x1024(75Hz) 1024x768(85Hz)	1280x1024(75Hz) 1024x768(85Hz)	1600x1200(70Hz) 1280x1024(80Hz)	1600x1200(70Hz) 1280x1024(80Hz)
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PC SERVER 330 P2-300/512 64MB, HP, RAID	$4,074.40
PC SERVER 330 P2-333/512 64MB, HP, RAID	$4,716.80

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messages on your PC. This feature also allows you to backup all of the application and data files. The docking station actually uses an IR interface port, which is built into the unit. This may possibly lead to other uses for the port, like unit-to-unit data transfer, printing, etc.

Services Available

At this time, SkyTel is the only company offering service for the PageWriter 2000; however, other companies are expected to join in. Prices start at $24.95 for 600 ten-character blocks of inbound or outbound traffic. (Note that any message over 500 characters will be truncated, so you won't use your entire allotment with one oversized erroneous message.) If you want operator-assisted messaging, it costs $0.65 per each 80-character block. This is a nationwide service, so there are no roaming charges if you travel away from home.

I had a chance to travel to Los Angeles and took the PageWriter 2000 along to see how it performed away from home. Email worked flawlessly, and I received replies just as usual, including the information telecasts described above. I was in a hilly area in a parking structure at one point, so the received messages came in somewhat garbled. However, the error-detection feature gave me the option to have them redelivered later and they came through perfectly!

SkyTel's "Advanced Messaging Network" offers some unique advantages over normal paging networks. First, is their "store and deliver" technology, which guarantees delivery of message, even when your pager is out of the service area or turned off. Messages will be automatically re-sent.

> *To send a page to another pager, the other pager must also be on the same network (SkyTel, for now). However, since you can also send email to anyone with an email address, this is not as great a limitation as it otherwise would be.*

Also, because this is a two-way network, there is built-in error detection/correction which will automatically re-send garbled messages.

A really cool feature just added is caller ID on numeric pages. This will display caller information, when available, on numeric pages. The service is optional and costs an additional $4.95 per month; however, the caller ID text doesn't count toward your monthly message allotment.

Info Telecasts

A cool part of the basic PageWriter 2000 service is a twice-daily Dow Jones report. It gives you an up-to-the-minute stock report, as well as a few headline news items. I like it because it is brief, concise, and to the point—no distracting animated GIFs.

Obviously, if the PageWriter takes off, there will probably be companies popping up with other types of broadcast information reports, most likely on a paid-subscription basis.

continued on page 214

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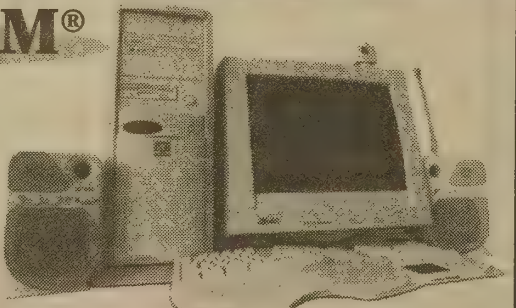

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Tapping Telecommuting's Productivity Dividend

And Weeding Out Or Working In Candidates

By Robert Moskowitz

One of the most complex and subtle concerns associated with successful telecommuting is productivity—not simple productivity issues like, "How long does it take to do a given task or accomplish a given result?", but less obvious aspects of productivity like, "What to do with your telecommuting productivity dividend?"

Telecommuting continues to grow in acceptance and its popularity continues to expand: Even the cautious US Bureau of Labor Statistics admits to the existence of nearly 11 million telecommuters today. So it's perfectly natural for those familiar and comfortable with telecommuting to move on from the very simple and obvious problems of how to encourage people toward telecommuting to more complex and subtle concerns that may follow.

One of the most complex and subtle concerns associated with successful telecommuting is productivity—not simple productivity issues like, "How long does it take to do a given task or accomplish a given result?", but less obvious aspects of productivity like, "What to do with your telecommuting productivity dividend?"

This question breaks down further into such concerns as: "Exactly what are you trying to accomplish?"; "How can you select the best goal to pursue?"; and "How do you know your time and efforts are taking you in the proper direction to accomplish that goal?"

I have been contemplating these and related questions since I first wrote *How To Organize Your Work and Your Time* (1981, revised 1993, Doubleday), and I'm not surprised to find they're as puzzling to most people today as they were back then.

This can often be seen as another manifestation of the old "forest and trees" analogy.

That is, it's important to be focused on your daily activities, the nuts and bolts of what you do and how you do it. If you get too "global" or "strategic" in your perspective, you begin to forget the important details, make silly or expensive mistakes, and hit all the bumps in the road head on.

But many times it's also important to be focused on strategic direction. These are the larger considerations, longer-term objectives, and macro possibilities that provide a framework for your day-to-day actions. If you get too detail-oriented, you begin to forget major purposes, overlook or ignore emerging opportunities, and take the wrong forks in the road—even when you appear to be making good time.

Most people acknowledge that if you're too focused on either one, you automatically neglect the other, and that you can achieve maximum productivity only when you view both the forest and the trees in balance.

Similarly, few people dispute the notion that telecommuting increases a person's overall productivity. The evidence is overwhelming. In rigorously controlled experiments as well as ad hoc surveys of their annual output, telecommuters routinely register improvements of 10% or more. Some attain far larger levels of productivity improvement. But it's not enough merely to recognize that telecommuting usually yields a productivity dividend, because it begs the real question: "What should the successful telecommuter do with all that extra time and energy?"

More Of The Same, Or Something Better?

The easy answer, of course, is to do more of the same. If you're managing contracts, as a telecommuter you can manage at least 10% more contracts than before. If you're auditing books, you can make time to audit at least 10% more books. If you're developing employment policies, you can develop at least 10% more employment policies while working away from the organization's centralized office.

But keeping your head down and plowing ahead doing more of the same is not always the most useful or successful course of action. There's a good chance you can make more overall progress by looking farther ahead and choosing a new direction, or by taking the time to learn new technology so when you once again put your head down, you can work faster or get better results.

A potentially better approach would be to do the same amount of work in at least 10% less time, and then make use of the extra time and energy—your telecommuting dividend—to accomplish something more useful or more

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important than the work already on your plate. You probably won't want to do this during the first week of telecommuting, but once an organization has a cadre of telecommuters, and people on both sides of the telecommuting relationships are comfortable with the process and with their respective roles, it's usually fruitful to look more globally at what those telecommuters are trying to accomplish.

Tweaking The Mission Statement: One good approach is to review or develop an overall "mission statement" not only for the organization, but for the positions now filled by one or more telecommuters. As you probably know, a mission statement is a description of the most important "added values" that the organization generates by its overall activities. It's normally conceived and developed by leaders who are trying hard to hold onto a broad, long-term perspective.

In many cases, an existing mission statement will offer insights or clues regarding some new responsibilities or directions the telecommuters can pursue. In other situations, the productivity dividend will itself provide time and energy to examine the organization's current activities and come up with a new, or an improved mission statement.

For example, a small communications consultancy that saw itself helping client companies produce better annual reports and investor relations materials used the extra productivity of its telecommuting top managers to review its mission statement. They quickly realized the company ought to be handling a broader range of public relations problems and opportunities for its clients. Within a few years, the company was generating more revenue from its new short-term "crisis management" services than from all its previously existing contracts.

A third approach for realizing benefits from the telecommuting dividend is for individual telecommuters to use their extra time and energy to initiate contact with their ultimate customers—the people inside or outside their organization who make use of whatever products and services the telecommuters provide.

In another case, a publishing company that had focused for years on producing controlled circulation newspapers for the computer industry made use of management time freed up through telecommuting to rethink its mission statement and to reinvent itself as a more global organization. As a result, it was able to branch out into other industries and apply its core competencies and established skills to the needs of customers in other industries. Net result: New controlled circulation newspapers for skiing, skating, golf, boating, hunting, and other industries.

Looking For New Opportunities: A shorter-term, less strategic approach for gaining benefits from the telecommuting dividend begins with each telecommuter making suggestions about extra goals or accomplishments that might be possible with the extra time and energy that telecommuting helps to make available. Without

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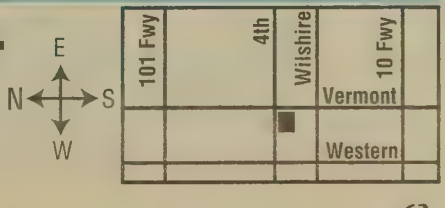

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any prompting, nearly everyone's natural response to a less crowded schedule is just to do more of the same work already being done. But when challenged to think about what more can be accomplished, most telecommuters can offer a surprisingly valuable shopping list of new opportunities and long-neglected projects.

For example, a supervisor of file clerks in a large insurance agency convinced her boss that she should use the extra time she had found through one-day-a-week telecommuting to develop a procedures manual for her team. Within a month, she had it ready, and within six months, her manager noted significant improvement in her team's response to rush demands and increased compliance with daily production schedules. The supervisor's telecommuting dividend was being leveraged into productivity improvements throughout the team.

Initiating Customer Contact: A third approach for realizing benefits from the telecommuting dividend is for individual telecommuters to use their extra time and energy to initiate contact with their ultimate customers—the people inside or outside their organization who make use of whatever products and services the telecommuters provide. After a while, this feedback will begin to coalesce around certain issues, certain problems, or certain opportunities that seem most fruitful to pursue. The telecommuters can then apply some of their extra time and energy toward responding to these issues, solving these problems or capitalizing on these opportunities—none of which would be perceived if it were not for the productivity advantages of telecommuting.

These three approaches can be applied in sequence, or concurrently. There may also be other ideas that make more sense in your particular situation. It matters how you apply the productivity gains of telecommuting, but it matters even more that you apply them to the most important goals and tasks you can find.

When "Duds" Apply To Be Telecommuters

No one suggests that telecommuting is rocket science, or brain surgery. Within even a modestly supportive organizational environment, the vast majority of people who want to succeed as telecommuters are certainly able to do so.

But this extremely high success rate doesn't imply that anyone at all can work successfully as a telecommuter.

Success at telecommuting seems to require a desire to work this way. When forced on people who don't want it, telecommuting can easily become an onerous burden, an ostracism from the centers of power of organizational society. A form of banishment, even!

What It Takes To Succeed: In addition to some degree of motivation, successful telecommuters usually show some loyalty to the company, a degree of self discipline, some self-confidence and self-reliance, a minimum comfort level with communicating at a distance, a responsible nature, good social skills but no discomfort at being alone for long periods of time, a willingness to learn new skills and new tools, and a well-organized approach to daily tasks.

It's an impressive package of traits that not everyone who wants to telecommute can muster. So it's inevitable that some people will apply for telecommuting positions without being able to demonstrate all the requisite characteristics.

The question then becomes, how do you handle requests you want to deny?

A simple way is to help the individual realize, one to one, that he or she has failed to demonstrate certain skills and traits that are important for success at telecommuting, and to give them some guidance on how to build such skills and the right kind of track record so they can be considered more favorably for telecommuting some time in the future.

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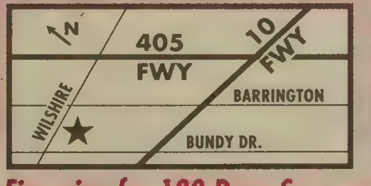

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Another, perhaps better approach is to develop a company policy that spells out minimum requirements for telecommuting—not only personal characteristics, but employment qualifications and required elements in job descriptions. Properly drawn, this policy will provide a fair, consistent basis for approving and disapproving applications to start telecommuting.

Some companies have found success in weeding out candidates who are unsuitable for telecommuting by sending all—or nearly all—applicants into a telecommuting training program. This helps filter out employees who don't meet minimum requirements—such as having a year or more of continuous employment with the organization, having no more than one absence or late arrival within the last year, and working in core positions (receptionists might be ineligible for telecommuting) or being responsible for certain tasks (like computer work or telephone work) that can easily be done as a telecommuter.

Telecommuting simulations are another element of telecommuter training that helps separate the good candidates for telecommuting from the more problematic candidates.

For example, many organizations now ask candidates for telecommuting to work for a week or two in the central office—but to pretend to be working at a distance. In other words, the telecommuter candidates can make phone calls to people who provide technical and administrative support, and can communicate with their supervisor and co-workers. But they can't have the normal face-to-face interaction available to everyone else working in the centralized facility.

This usually puts a considerable amount of pressure on the candidates. Those with the skills and motivation to succeed can work through their problems and manage to accomplish some useful work despite the difficulties. The less qualified candidates will often wash out of the training. Without the right skills and strong enough motivation to succeed as telecommuters, they'll usually find the whole experience so frustrating and difficult that they give up the notion of telecommuting and withdraw their applications.

In any case, this kind of simulation has real value, because it's an excellent way to provide candidate telecommuters with a real "immersion" experience in which to learn and practice the techniques and self-discipline methods they'll need when telecommuting for real. Because the telecommuter candidates are operating within a kind of protected environment, when they eventually complete their training and go home to work, they won't face such a severe "sink or swim" situation. It also helps the telecommuter candidate's supervisors learn how to communicate at a distance. ◆

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Telecommuting simulations are another element of telecommuter training that helps separate the good candidates for telecommuting from the more problematic candidates.

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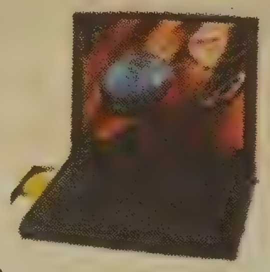

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Linux The Pilot!

New Dimensions In Portability

By Bennett Falk

Over the years, the UNIX community has developed some clever ways for its members to identify themselves. For example, anyone who thinks that "Live Free or Die" is just motto for the State of New Hampshire is probably not on the UNIX bus.

The UNIX community is an odd and sometimes secretive group, held together by a set of cultural values that happen to be embodied in a piece of software. In the UNIX community, UNIX is more than a piece of software. This is tricky territory, because the people who believe that UNIX is more than a piece of software are naturally suspicious of anyone who walks down the street loudly declaring "UNIX is more than a piece of software."

Over the years, the UNIX community has developed some clever ways for its members to identify themselves. For example, anyone who thinks that "Live Free or Die" is just motto for the State of New Hampshire is probably not on the UNIX bus.

The Jargon Dictionary credits Armando Stettner with the creation and distribution of fake New Hampshire license plates emblazoned with the UNIX name and the "Live Free or Die" motto.

In the late 1990s, if you want to know whether you're on the bus or off the bus, take this simple test. What is your reaction to this sentence?

"Linux has been ported to the Palm Pilot."

The three most typical reactions are: a euphoric grin, "No way!", and "Huh?"

If you're grinning euphorically, you're on the bus. If you said, "No way!", all I can say in response is, "Way." If you said, "Huh?", we need to do a little remedial euphoria training, and we'll start with the words Linux, port, and Pilot.

Linux

Linux is a free UNIX-like operating system that contains no UNIX™ source code. "UNIX-like" encompasses an almost bewildering range of features. Linux is a multi-user and multi-tasking network operating system. It faithfully reproduces the UNIX APIs. It relies on X Windows for its graphical user interface.

Linux was written from scratch by volunteer labor. It is maintained, extended, documented, and promoted largely by volunteers. There are some companies that sell Linux implementations, but what they really sell is support and packaging. If you paid someone money for Linux, the software you bought had better be easy to install and the vendor had better be able to answer your questions about it.

Linux is enormously popular with somewhere between five million and twenty million installations worldwide. Because it is free, no one is responsible for measuring its installed base, and chances are, no one (except Bill Gates or Scott McNealy) really cares how popular it is.

Unlike most commercial UNIX systems (which tend to a minimum requirement of 100MB of disk), Linux is very elastic. A full-blown Linux system with all the accessories has much the same disk requirements as commercial UNIX systems, but there are also functional Linux distributions as small as 3MB. Some enterprising folks have squeezed a bootable Linux file system onto a floppy disk.

Because it is so configurable, Linux has proven to be eminently portable. Porting is the process of adapting a piece of software written for one hardware platform to run on another. Portability was one of the original goals of the UNIX system (though as UNIX has gotten larger, that goal has receded over the horizon). The Linux community, however, has taken the idea of portability and run with it. Linux has been ported all over the personal computer universe and there are versions of Linux for Sun SPARC and Silicon Graphics hardware.

Pilot

And of course, there is the Palm Pilot. The Palm Pilot is the first "Personal Digital Assistant" to catch on in a big way. The Palm Pilot is a small computer that fits in a shirt pocket, has about a dozen built-in applications and utilities in ROM, and runs for months on a pair of AAA batteries. Early models of the Pilot had 128K of memory. The recently released Palm III comes with 2MB of memory.

The Pilot has sparked a furious amount of development activity: there are Web browsers

continued on page 74

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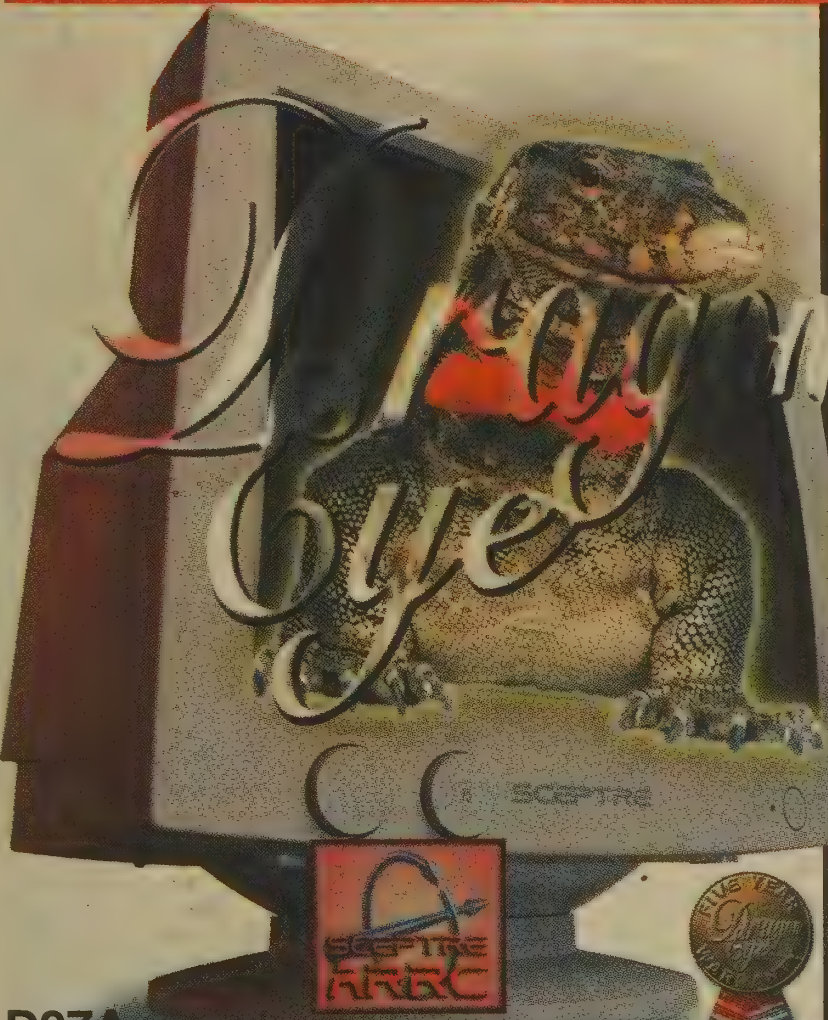

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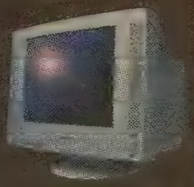

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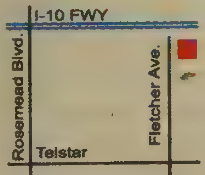

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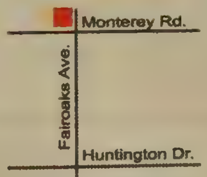

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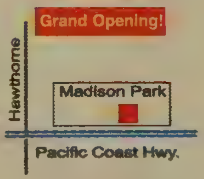

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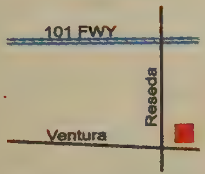

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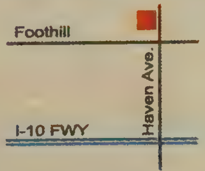

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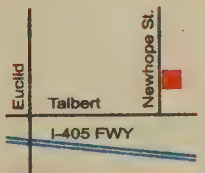

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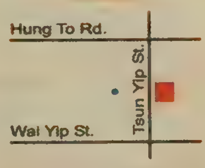

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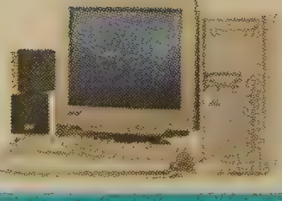

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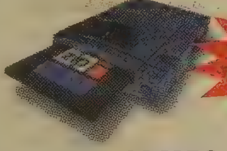

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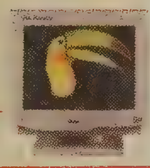

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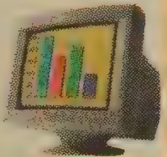

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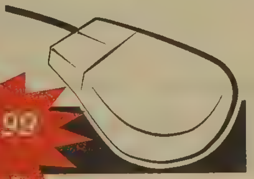

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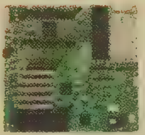

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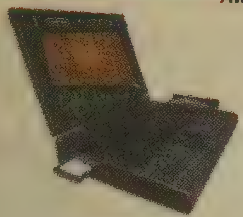
Award Winner, PC Magazine, Jan. 21, 1997



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continued from page 70

and email readers and games and what not for the Palm Pilot. The intensity of Pilot development is such that there are software Pilot emulators for Windows and X Windows to allow developers to debug and test programs without the hassle of repeatedly moving the partially debugged program to a real Palm Pilot. The Copilot emulator, which provides a realistic image (complete with backlit display) of the Pilot, is also a pretty good utility to have on your PC desktop.

The Pilot has also generated an accessory industry that produces things like memory cards. TRG recently announced a "Super Pilot" memory card that packs 8MB of RAM into the Pilot.

New Vistas

It is these hardware accessories that begin to make life more interesting. The TRG products use "flash" memory where the regular Pilot has ROM. Flash memory is writable, and consequently with a Pilot that has been enhanced with a TRG memory board, it's possible to do creative things with the memory space in which the Pilot's operating system resides.

Kenneth Albanowski and D. Jeff Dionne, the programming team of the Silver Hammer Group, Ltd., have done something creative with that space: they've produced a version of the Linux kernel (Linux version 2.033) that runs on the Motorola "Dragonball" CPU that the Pilot uses.

This effort is known as "The Linux Microcontroller Project" and its Linux port goes under the name "uCLinux" ("u" being a tortured representation of the Greek mu). The Palm Pilot port is one of a number of attempts to move Linux to hardware that does not have a Memory Management Unit (MMU). One imagines that the lack of an MMU might not be quite so critical if the hardware in question had at least a disk drive.

Running the Linux kernel on the Palm Pilot requires some preparation. First, of course, the Pilot must be outfitted with a TRG memory board that provides at least 2MB of RAM. You'll also need to download the Linux ROM image from the Silver Hammer Group's Web site at Ryerson Polytechnic in Ontario (*http://ryeham.ee.ryerson.ca/uClinux/*). And you'll need TRG's utilities to manage flash memory. These are available for download from the TRG Web site: *www.trgnet.com/ftp/linux10.zip* . The utilities are DOS programs, so it is assumed that you have a PC with a serial port that the Pilot can be connected to.

Before trying to load the Linux kernel, it's wise to dump the Palm OS to an external file that can be reloaded into the Pilot later. 3Com, the maker of the Pilot, has recently made debug versions of the Pilot ROM available in the developers' area of its Web site, but it's still a good idea to save an image of the OS you started with.

After an image of the Palm OS has been saved, TRG's bootloader utility can be used to install the Linux kernel (vmlinux) into flash memory. Once loaded, the Linux kernel will boot when the Pilot is reset.

For those who don't want to go to the expense of buying and customizing an actual Palm Pilot, the Linux Microcontroller Project also makes available a modified version of Xcopilot, the Palm Pilot emulator for X Windows. The modifications allow the vmlinux ROM to be loaded into and run by the emulator.

continued on page 78

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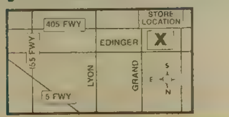

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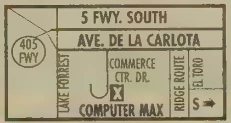

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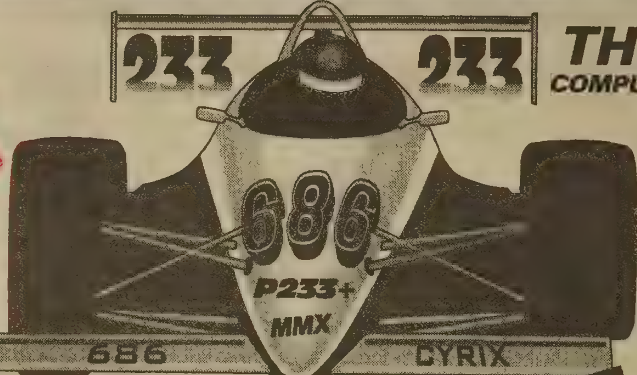

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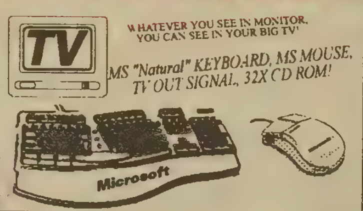

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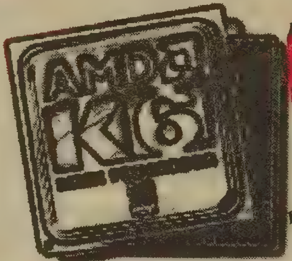

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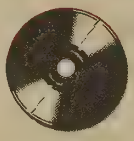

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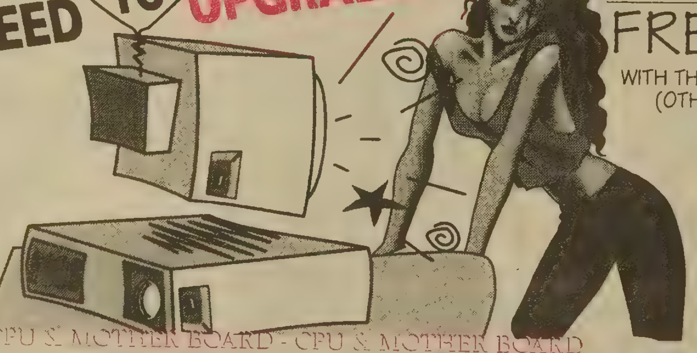

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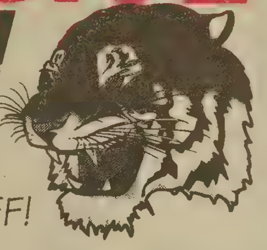

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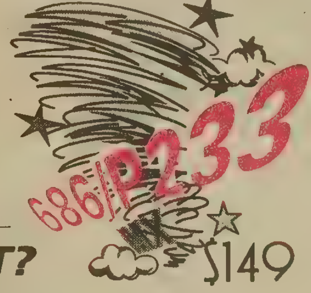

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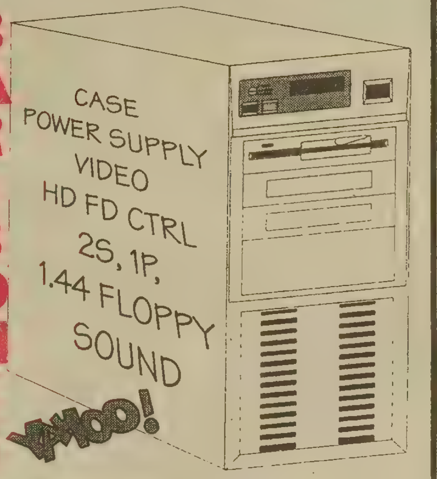

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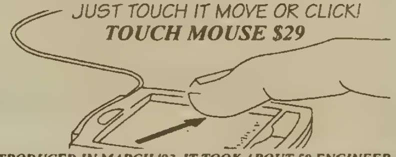

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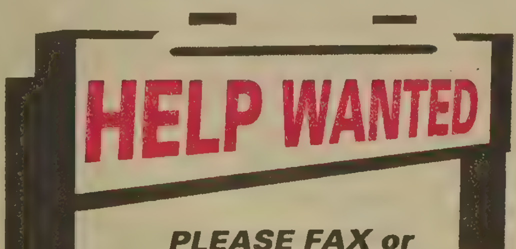

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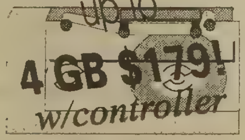

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continued from page 74

The Windows-based Copilot emulator (as yet untweaked) was unable to load the Linux kernel.

Running Linux on the Xcopilot emulator when the emulator in turn is running on a Linux system is a dizzying, but not unsatisfying experience.

What Good Is This?

Once you've booted the Linux kernel on a Pilot, what exactly can you do with it? Well, not much: a bare kernel has no user interface to speak of, and the uClinux kernel is still at a very early stage of development ("pre-alpha," the Web site warns).

The uClinux kernel loads itself, creates an array of RAM disks in available memory and mounts a read-only version of the root filesystem. It initializes a serial line (tty) driver on the Pilot's built-in serial port. (This raises the prospect that someday, someone will hook up a serial terminal to a Palm Pilot to login to uClinux.)

> *Portability was one of the original goals of the UNIX system (though as UNIX has gotten larger, that goal has receded over the horizon). The Linux community, however, has taken the idea of portability and run with it.*

For the time being, when the kernel boots, it puts a "Welcome to Linux" message on the Pilot's screen along the with an icon of the Linux penguin mascot. There are no login or shell utilities yet.

The folks at the Silver Hammer Group are working on a port of the basic C library to uClinux, and that is a necessary prelude to providing usable utilities. With 8MB memory cards for the Pilot, there is more than enough memory to put together a small, functional Linux system on the Pilot.

UNIX, it should be remembered, was once a fairly small system with modest hardware requirements: the first UNIX system in 1969 ran on a PDP-11 with 24K of memory. As late as 1981, a super-micro computer with 2.5MB of RAM could serve as a time-sharing system for 10 users. uClinux demonstrates that porting UNIX does not necessarily mean moving it to bigger, more powerful hardware.

uClinux probably does not have a lot of commercial potential, but thankfully, that is not the point. Like most of the Linux efforts underway, the developers ported Linux to the Pilot just because they could.

And because they understood that Linux is more than a piece of software. ◆

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Resources:

Linux
www.linux.org
www.geocities.com/SiliconValley/Heights/6494/linux.html

Palm Pilot
www.palmpilot.com
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Silver Hammer Group, Ltd.
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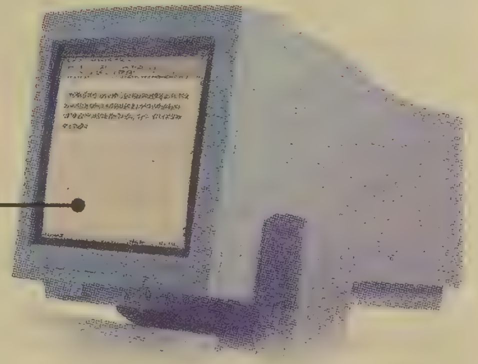

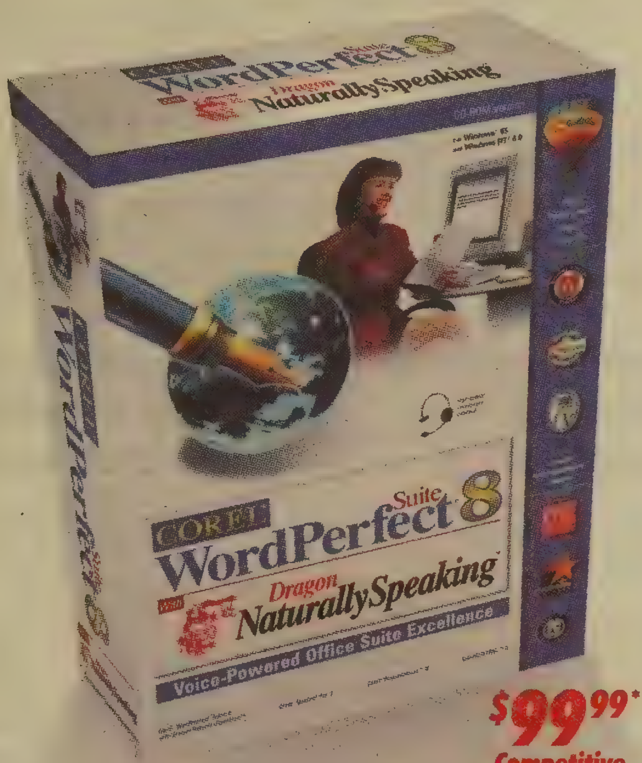

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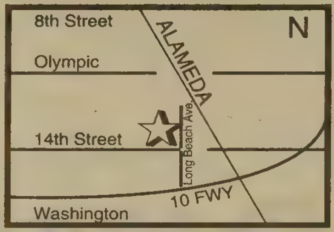

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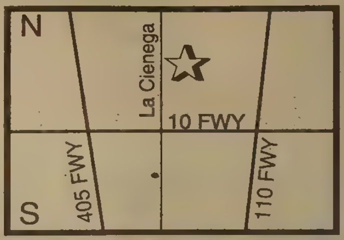

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Reality Check: Assembly

Cases, Cables, Etc.

By Fabian Pascal

The case must keep the temperature low enough for proper operation and long life of all components, particularly for 100MHz bus systems with 300MHz+ CPUs and hot 7,200RPM and up disk drives This requires a high-quality, well-designed and engineered case from a reputable vendor, certified for such systems and components.

The previous articles in this series discussed the basics of, and trends in, PC technologies and components: system board, processor subsystem (CPU, memory); graphics subsystem (monitor, graphics adapter); and disk subsystem (disk controller, drives, cables), assembly (case, drive enclosures, power supply).

I've been testing and benchmarking the currently recommended 66MHz bus (PC66) system (Listing 1) for quite a while. The next several articles will discuss the results, in the same order: assembly, processor, graphics, and disk subsystems. All this, to recap, is in preparation for the new, 100MHz bus systems (PC100), which will be compared to the current system to gauge the gains, if any.

You may want to hold on to these articles—or access them at the *MicroTimes* site—so you can interpret the findings in the proper context.

Updates

Things are moving in all PC areas. Intel is shipping the new PII/350 and PII/400 CPUs for PC100 Slot 1 systems; system boards based on the Intel BX chipset are already available. Super7—100MHz bus Socket 7—system boards based on VIA and Aladdin chipsets are forthcoming, together with AMD's K6-2 CPU (previously known as K6-3D).

So I've begun work on putting together two 100MHz systems: One based on Abit's BX6 Slot 1 main board; and a Super7 one using a system board based on one of the non-Intel chipsets (VIA or Aladdin) and a K6-2 CPU. Both systems will include the new PC100-compliant 8ns SDRAM (very important!!), better CPU coolers, and possibly new cases. Since the 100MHz bus and faster SDRAM allow exploitation of AGP, I am looking into graphics adapters from ATI, Matrox, and Diamond. The forthcoming Windows NT 5.0 will support AGP.

NT 5.0 will also support the Universal Serial Bus (USB). At that point I will be looking at all-in-one devices—scanner, printer, copier, and fax—hopefully color laser (rather than inkjet) based; and later on, 19"/21" LCD panels, when 21" ones become affordable. You should note that I added the Logitech Cordless Desktop—mouse and keyboard combination—to the recommended system, and I hope a USB version will become available.

There are also new developments in the removable drive arena—both the gigabyte and floppy segments—as well as in the CD-ROMs; I am soliciting review units from vendors.

I've been holding back on another important subsystem, communication. What seem to be the best solutions for fast Internet access—cable modem and Digital Subscriber Line (DSL)—are either unavailable, or too expensive for the individual user. Until TCI comes up with a cable solution in San Francisco (likely via @Home) and force both Pacific Bell and Covad to compete price-wise, the only option remains ISDN, which is not sufficiently fast for the price. A possible solution, if temporary, could be connecting two 56K modems over two phone lines, but 3Com's OfficeConnect LAN Modem is network oriented, while Diamond's shotgun, geared to individuals, does not work under NT yet. I will be monitoring developments and cover the first of these solution, when appropriate.

You can find information and links that, due to space constraints, cannot be included in the articles (e.g. recommended software, benchmark descriptions, resources links, etc.), at the series' page on the *MicroTimes* site (see Resources for the URL).

Now to the system's assembly components.

A Cool Case

One aspect which required more attention than I originally anticipated was cooling. The case must keep the temperature low enough for proper operation and long life of all components, particularly for 100MHz bus systems with 300MHz+ CPUs and hot 7,200RPM and up disk drives. For the user this means a high-quality, well-designed and engineered case from a reputable vendor, certified for such systems and components.

It also means that the case should allow for multiple, properly positioned fans. The California

continued on page 100

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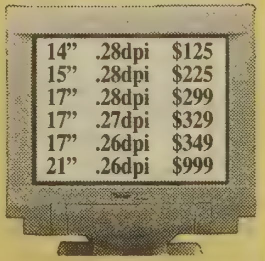

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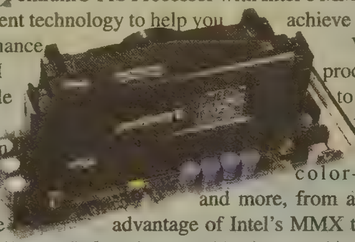

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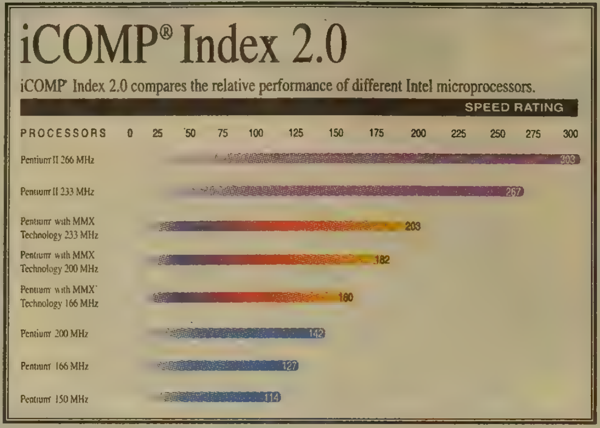

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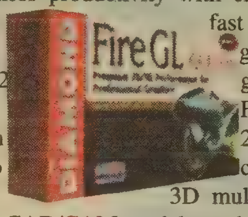

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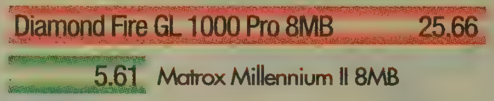
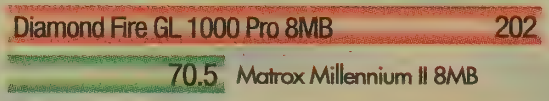


3D WinBench 97*



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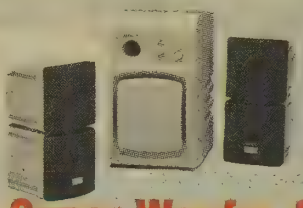

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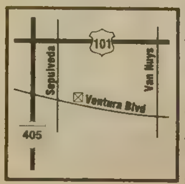

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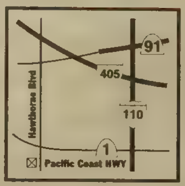

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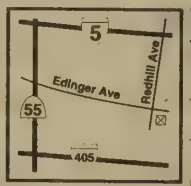

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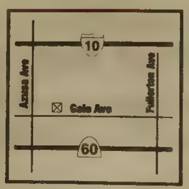

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*Mid Tower Case, 6 Drive Bays
*Microsoft Windows 95'

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Pentium®II 266	**$1599**	**Pentium® II 350**	**$2049**
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*_100MB IDE ZIP Drive_
*_8.0GB Ultra ATA_ Hard Drive
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*Hi-Resolution Mouse
*Mid Tower Case, 6 Drive Bays
*Microsoft Windows 95'

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*_Super Woofer & Satellite_ Speaker Systems
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*_US Robotics 56K V.90_ Fax Modem
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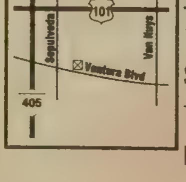

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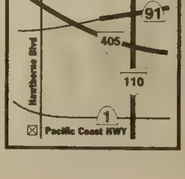

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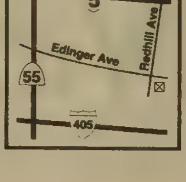

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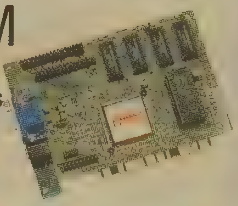

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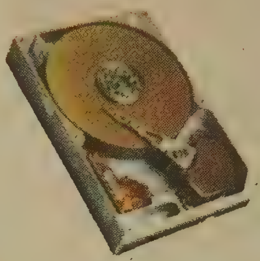

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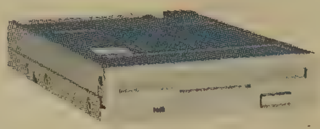

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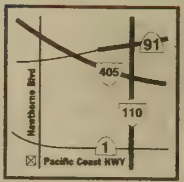

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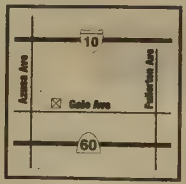

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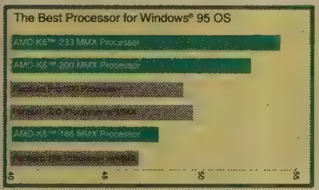

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6x86MX Processor
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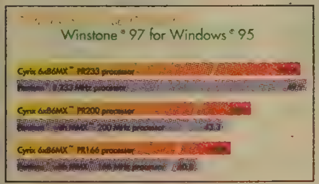

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AMD K6	K6-233 $209	K6-266 $249	K6-300 $289
6x86	233MX $199	266MX $239	300MX $279

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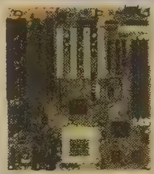

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AMD K6	K6-233 $209	K6-266 $249	K6-300 $289
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- Dual Ultra33 EIDE & Hi-Speed I/O

intel	166MMX $209	200MMX $209	233MMX $229
AMD K6	K6-233 $189	K6-266 $229	K6-300 $269
6x86	233MX $179	266MX $219	300MX $259

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intel	166MMX $339	200MMX $339	233MMX $359
AMD K6	K6-233 $319	K6-266 $359	K6-300 $399
6x86	233MX [illegible]	266MX $349	300MX $389

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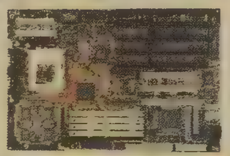

512K Pipeline Burst Cache

- Intel Triton 430TX, 75-300MHz
- Pentium, MMX, 6x86, M2, AMD K5 & K6
- 2x168-Pin DIMM, 4x72-Pin SIMM
- 5xPCI / 3xISA Slots

intel	166MMX $209	200MMX $209	233MMX $229
AMD K6	K6-233 $189	K6-266 $229	K6-300 $269
6x86	233MX $179	266MX $219	300MX $259

$99.99

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BS100

- Intel 440BX 100 MHz AGP Chipset
- Pentium II 233-400MHz +
- Dual Channel Adaptec 3940UW
- 4x168-Pin DIMM, 512MB Max
- 5xPCI / 2xISA / 1xAGP Slots

intel			
	233 $489	266 $539	300 $649
	333 $779	350 $879	400 $1079

$299.99

ABIT

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TX5

512K Pipeline Burst Cache

- Intel Triton 430TX Chipset, 75-300MHz
- Pentium, MMX, 6x86, M2, AMD K5, K6
- 2x168-Pin DIMM & 4x72-Pin SIMM
- 4xPCI / 3xISA Slots
- Dual Ultra33 EIDE & Hi-Speed I/O

intel	166MMX $209	200MMX $209	233MMX $239
AMD K6	K6-233 $189	K6-266 $229	K6-300 $269
6x86	200MX $169	233MX $179	266MX $219

$99.99

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- Pentium II 233-400MHz +
- New 440BX 100MHz AGP Chipset
- AGP, SDRAM, Ultra DMA Support
- 4x 168-Pin DIMM
- 4x PCI / 3xISA / AGP Slots

intel			
	233 $369	266 $419	300 $529
	333 $659	350 $759	400 $959

$179.99

ABIT

Your Reliable Partner

LX6

- Pentium II 233-333MHz +
- New 440LX AGP Chipset
- AGP, SDRAM, Ultra DMA Support
- 4x 168-Pin DIMM
- 4x PCI / 3xISA / AGP Slots

intel			
	233 $329	266Celeron $289	266 $379
	300 $489	333 $619	400 N/A

$139.99

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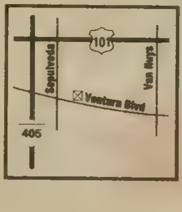

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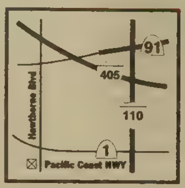

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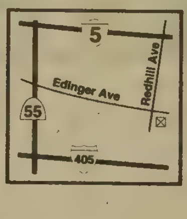

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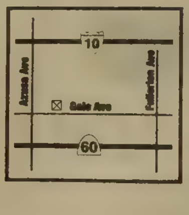

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MMX intel inside pentium II

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- 4x168-Pin DIMM
- 4xPCI / 3xISA / 1xAGP Slots
- Adaptec 3940UW & Raid Bus

intel	300 $799	333 $929	350 $1029
	400 $1229	350x2 $1609	400x2 $2009

$\$449^{99}$

MMX intel inside pentium II

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P6SBA

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- Pentium II 233-400MHz +
- 3x168-Pin DIMM
- 4xPCI / 3xISA / 1xAGP Slots

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	333 $639	350 $739	400 $939

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SUPERMICRO
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- AGP, SDRAM, Ultra DMA Support
- 3x 168-Pin DIMM
- 4x PCI / 3xISA / AGP Slots

intel	233 $319	266Celeron $279	266 $369
	300 $479	333 $609	400 N/A

$\$129^{99}$

MMX intel inside pentium II

SUPERMICRO
SUPER MICRO COMPUTER INC.

P6SBS

- New 440BX 100MHz chipset
- Pentium II 233-400MHz +
- 4x168-Pin DIMM
- 4xPCI / 3xISA / 1xAGP Slots
- Adaptec Dual Channel 3940 Ultra Wide SCSI

intel	233 $489	266 $539	300 $649
	333 $779	350 $879	400 $1079

$\$299^{99}$

SUPERMICRO
SUPER MICRO COMPUTER INC.

P5MMA98

512K Pipeline Burst Cache

- Intel 430TX, 75-300MHz, ATX Form Factor
- Pentium, MMX, 6x86, M2, AMD K5, K6
- 4x72-Pin SIMM & 2x168-Pin DIMM
- 4xPCI / 4xISA Slots
- Dual Ultra33 EIDE & Hi-Speed I/O

intel	166MMX $219	200MMX $219	233MMX $239
AMD K6	K6-233 $199	K6-266 $239	K6-300 $279
6x86	200MX $179	233MX $189	266MX [illegible]

$\$109^{99}$

SUPERMICRO
SUPER MICRO COMPUTER INC.

P5MMS98

512K Pipeline Burst Cache

- Intel Triton 430TX, 75-300MHz
- Pentium, MMX, 6x86, M2, AMD K5, K6
- 4x72-Pin SIMM & 2x168-Pin DIMM
- 4xPCI / 4xISA Slots
- Dual Ultra33 EIDE & Hi-Speed I/O

intel	166MMX $209	200MMX $209	233MMX $229
AMD K6	K6-233 $189	K6-266 $229	K6-300 $269
6x86	200MX $159	233MX $179	266MX $219

$\$99^{99}$

MMX intel inside pentium II

TYAN COMPUTER

Tsunami

- New Intel 440BX 100MHz chipset
- Pentium II 233-400MHz+
- 4x168-Pin DIMM
- 5xPCI / 2xISA / AGP slots
- Ultra DMA/33, ATX Form Factor

intel	233 $369	266 $419	300 $529
	333 $659	350 $759	400 $959

$\$179^{99}$

TYAN COMPUTER

Dual Tomcat IV

512K Pipeline Burst Cache

- Intel Triton 430HX, 75-233MHz
- Supports Single or Dual Processor
- Pentium, MMX, 6x86, AMD K5
- 8x72-Pin SIMM, 256MB Max
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intel	200MMX $289	233MMX $309	233x2 $439
AMD K6	K6-200 $259	K6-233 $269	K6-266 N/A
6x86	200MX $249	233MX N/A	266MX N/A

$\$179^{99}$

TYAN COMPUTER

Titan Turbo AT-2
Titan Turbo ATX-2

512K Pipeline Burst Cache

- Intel Triton TX, 75-266MHz
- Pentium, MMX, 6x86, AMD K5, K6
- 6x72-Pin SIMM, 2x168-Pin DIMM
- 4xPCI / 4xISA Slots
- Dual Ultra33 EIDE & Hi-Speed I/O

intel	166MMX $209	200MMX $209	233MMX $229
AMD K6	K6-200 $179	K6-233 $189	K6-266 N/A
6x86	200MX [illegible]	233MX $179	266MX N/A

$\$99^{99}$

AGP ACCELERATED GRAPHICS PORT

503+

1MB Pipeline Burst Cache

- VIA Apollo Chipset, 75-300MHz
- Pentium, MMX, 6x86, M2, AMD K5, K6
- 2x168-Pin & 4x72-Pin SIMM
- 3xISA / 3xPCI / AGP Slots
- Dual Ultra33 EIDE & Hi-Speed I/O

intel	166MMX $219	200MMX $219	233MMX $239
AMD K6	K6-233 $199	K6-266 $239	K6-300 $279
6x86	233MX $189	266MX $229	300MX $269

$\$109^{99}$

MMX intel inside pentium II

intel® Chipset

440BX AGP

- Pentium II 233-400MHz+
- New 440BX 100MHz AGP Chipset
- 3x168-Pin DIMM
- 4xPCI / 3xISA / AGP Slots
- ATX Form Factor

intel	233 $319	266 $369	300 $479
	333 $609	350 $709	400 $909

$\$129^{99}$

MMX intel inside pentium II

intel® Chipset

440LX AGP

- Pentium II 233-333MHz
- New 440LX AGP Chipset
- 3x168-Pin DIMM
- 4xPCI / 3xISA / AGP Slots
- ATX Form Factor

intel	233 $289	266Celeron $249	266 $339
	300 $449	333 $579	400 N/A

$\$99^{99}$

TX Pro

512K Pipeline Burst Cache

- TX Pro Chipset, 75-300MHz
- Pentium, MMX, 6x86, M2, AMD K5, K6
- 4x72-Pin SIMM, 2x168-Pin DIMM
- 3xPCI / 2xISA Slots
- Dual Ultra33 EIDE & Hi-Speed I/O

intel	166MMX $169	200MMX $169	233MMX $189
AMD K6	K6-233 $149	K6-266 $189	K6-300 $229
6x86	233MX $129	266MX $139	300MX $179

$\$59^{99}$

AGP ACCELERATED GRAPHICS PORT

VIA Apollo

1MB Pipeline Burst Cache

- VIA Apollo VP3 chipset, 75-266MHz
- Pentium, MMX, 6x86, M2, AMD K5, K6
- 4x72-Pin SIMM, 2x168-Pin DIMM
- 4xPCI / 3xISA / AGP Slots
- Dual Ultra33 EIDE & Hi-Speed I/O

intel	166MMX $189	200MMX $189	233MMX $209
AMD K6	K6-200 $159	K6-233 $169	K6-266 N/A
6x86	200MX $149	233MX $159	266MX $199

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intel® Chipset

Intel Triton TX

512K Pipeline Burst Cache

- Intel Triton 430TX, 75-300MHz
- Pentium, MMX, 6x86, M2, AMD K5 & K6
- 4x72-Pin SIMM, 2x168-Pin DIMM
- 4xPCI / 3xISA Slots
- Dual Ultra33 EIDE & Hi-Speed I/O

intel	166MMX $179	200MMX $179	233MMX $199
AMD K6	K6-233 $149	K6-266 [illegible]	K6-300 $239
6x86	200MX $139	233MX $149	266MX $189

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- 11ms Access Time
- 128K Buffer
- 3 Year Warranty

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WESTERN DIGITAL

2.5GB Ultra ATA
- WD 22500A
- 33MB/sec Ultra DMA
- 11ms Access Time
- 128K Buffer
- 3 Year Warranty

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$139.99

WESTERN DIGITAL

3.2GB Ultra ATA
- WD 23200A
- 33MB/sec Ultra DMA
- 10ms Access Time
- 128K Buffer
- 3 Year Warranty

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- 256K Buffer
- 3 Year Warranty

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- WD 36400A
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- WD 38400A
- 33MB/sec Ultra DMA
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- 256K Buffer
- 3 Year Warranty

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- 33MB/sec Ultra DMA
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- 512K Buffer
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8.4GB Ultra ATA
- DHEA 34800A
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- 33 MB/sec Ultra DMA
- 512K Buffer
- 5400 RPM
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- 10ms Access Time
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- 512K Buffer
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- 33MB/sec Ultra DMA
- 11ms Access Time
- 128K Buffer
- 3 Year Warranty

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- Bigfoot Q50800TX-A
- 33MB/sec Ultra DMA
- 11ms Access Time
- 128K Buffer
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- 33MB/sec Ultra DMA
- 11ms Access Time
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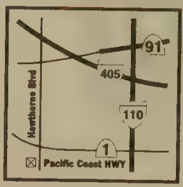

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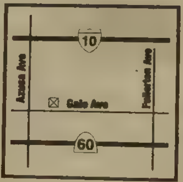

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- 5400 RPM
- 512K Buffer
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- 512K Buffer
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- 512K Buffer
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- 7200 RPM

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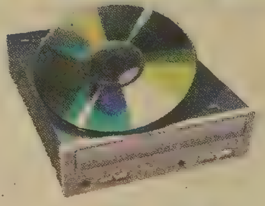

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- 128K Buffer
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32X

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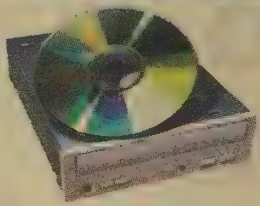

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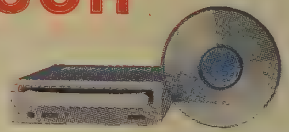

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TOSHIBA

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- 80ms Access Time
- 256K Buffer
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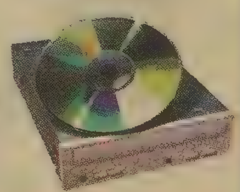

- 90ms Access
- 512K Buffer
- 4.8MB/Sec Transfer

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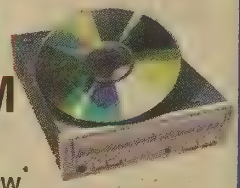

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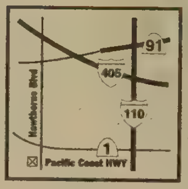

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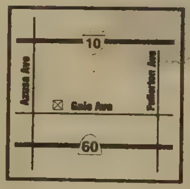

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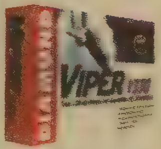

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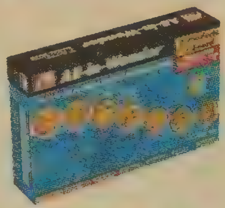

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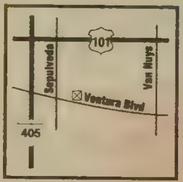

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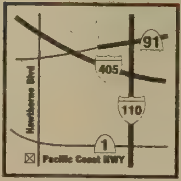

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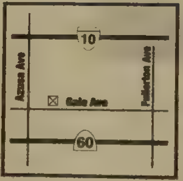

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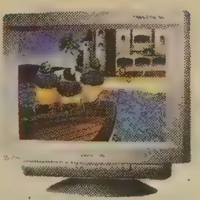

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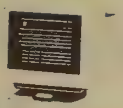

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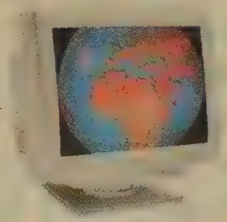
VISIONMASTER iiyama



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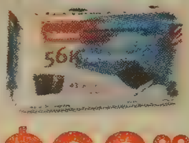

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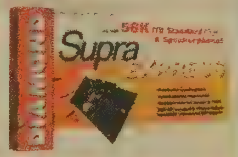

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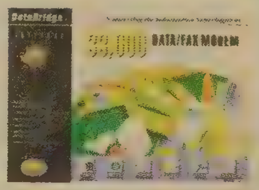

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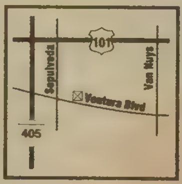

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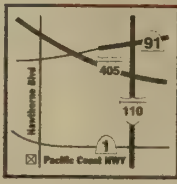

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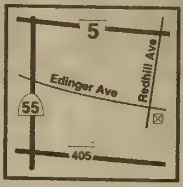

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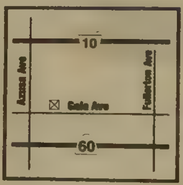

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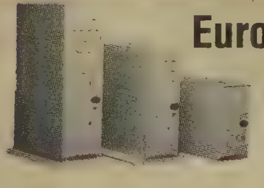

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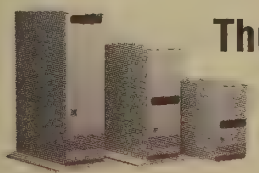

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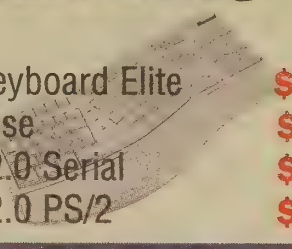

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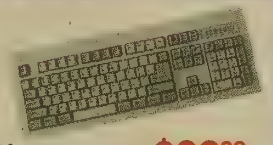

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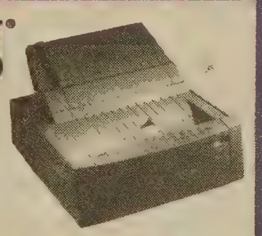

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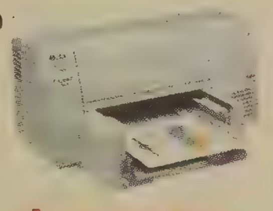

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PC Products (CalPC) case accepts two additional fans in front, under the drive bays, but they are optional, so they should be explicitly ordered.

Retail CPUs come with coolers—heatsink and fan—but you may want to consider a better one (particularly if you intend to overclock, that is, run the CPU at a higher speed than it is certified for; more on this in future articles). If you find an OEM who will sell you an OEM version of the CPU (that is, one without the cooler), you can use the savings to get a better one than those that come with the retail version.

Faster, hotter drives should be positioned closer to fans. The bottom two bays in the CalPC case are best for the 10,000RPM IBM and 7,200RPM Quantum drives but, unfortunately, obstruction by the structure for card insertion makes cable connections to drives in those bays quite cumbersome. For the same reason, removable drive enclosures are too deep to fit there.

So for the IBM Ultrastar I use a cooling enclosure—CalPC's Bay Cooler—which has two front fans of its own. Unfortunately, it is not removable and does not offer conveniences such as SCSI ID setting and termination, as removable enclosures do.

For such features and removability, Kingston's Data Express enclosures allow the drive to be screwed into the carrier, preventing vibration (which IBM strongly warns against); they also have a hot swap option, which allows drive removal/insertion while system is on (care should be exercised); and it provides both termination and SCSI ID setting. But they have no fans.

> *Systems have become very sensitive to any small quirk; potential sources of problems have increased considerably, and have become more difficult to diagnose, so be prepared for them.*

Furthermore, the DE-100 model I started with is a tad higher, to handle thicker, 1'6" drives like the Ultrastar, and you'll lose the bay above it (even a bay bezel that comes with the case to prevent dust from getting into the system doesn't fit over the gap). Kingston now has a DE-75 model, which has normal height and thus fits regular 1" high drives. CRU's Data Port VI, sold by CalPC, has no screws for the drive, no termination settings and no hot swap, but has a back fan.

For removable drives such as the SyJet, Kingston's DE-150 enclosure will do. As it turns out, however, you must also get the DX-100 kit which adjusts the enclosure to the SyJet; otherwise the drive won't fit into it. The DE-75 has the same features as the DE-100, including height and lack of fans.

Monitoring system voltages, temperature and fan operation, and being alerted of problems is a good idea, but the system board must implement special chips that support this. Current Socket 7 boards generally have the LM78 (voltage, board temperature and fans speed) and the LM78 (CPU temperature) built-in. Slot 1 boards may have only the LM78, since the CPU is not really on the board and the manufacturer may have not provided the LM75 on its own.

If the LM78 is installed, a section in BIOS shows voltages, fan speed, and system board temperature (LM78); it also shows CPU temperature if the LM75 is installed. But monitoring via the BIOS is not practical, particularly since there are no alerts. The solution is a software utility which monitors the data on the desktop and alerts you to problems, e.g. the Motherboard Monitor, which runs on NT.

Note, however, that if the chips are not installed, or are implemented in

Listing 1: Recommended 66MHz Bus System (PC66)

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SY-6KB, $160 (direct)
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www.soyo.com

PROCESSOR SUBSYSTEM

Pentium II/300MHz Processor, $720 (direct)
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www.eizo.com

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(905)882-2600
www.atitech.com

SCSI DISK SUBSYSTEM

AHA2940UW UltraWide controller, $125–$150
Adaptec Inc.
(408)945-8600
www.adaptec.com

UltraStar 9ZX UltraWide 9GB disk drive, $1,130
IBM Storage Systems Division
1-800-IBM-7777
www.ibm.com/storage

Viking II 9GB UltraWide disk drive, $895 (MSRP)
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www.quantum.com

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SCSIVue Gold Diagnostic Active Terminator
50pin HD, $79 (direct)
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www.imation.com

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www.logitech.com

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Bay Cooler, $32.50 (direct)
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www.calpc.com

Data Express Removable Enclosures
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DE-150 SCSI (removable disks), **$186** (MSRP)
DX-100 Kit Option, $29 (MSRP)
Hot Swap Option, $64 (MSRP)
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1-888-435-5461
www.kingston.com

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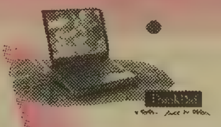

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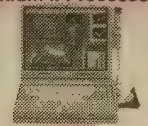

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480CDT	P-233,10X	32MB	3.87GB	12.1" TFT	$2699
520CDT	P-166,10X	32MB	2.02GB	12.1" TFT	$2599
530CDT	P-166,10X	32MB	2.02GB	12.1" TFT	$2799
650CT	P-133, 28.8	16MB	1.3GB	11.3"ACT	$1499
660CDT	P-150, 28.8	16MB	1.3/10X	11.3"ACT	$1899
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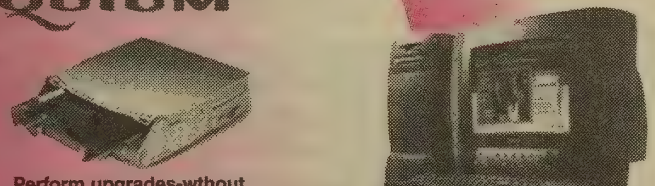

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Presario 1220	P-200, 20X	32MB	2.1GB	56K F/M	12.1" DSTN	$1599
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770DVD	P-233MMX	32MB	5.1GB	DVD	14.1" TFT	$4185

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Manufacturer	Product	Price
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Megahertz XJ1228	33.6kbs PCMCIA Fax/Modem	$99.00
Billionton 56K	56kbs PCMCIA Fax/Modem	$99.00
Battery	For Compaq Presario 1610, 1620, 1210	$79.00

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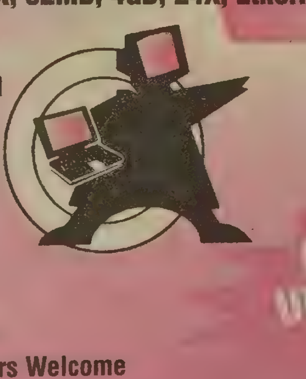

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nonstandard fashion, the program's readings and the alerts will be false. For example, the BIOS information indicates that the SOYO SY-6KB board has both chips, but some of Motherboard Monitor's voltage readings are way off, which suggests a nonstandard implementation of the chips.

The Ultrastar drive, because it gets hotter, has IBM's Drive-TIP (Temperature Indicator Processor), a self-monitoring processor which records system information on a reserved portion of the drive and can alert the host system of heat problems. The host must then alert the user. How this should work is part of the S.M.A.R.T specifications, currently being standardized but not yet integrated into systems and operating systems. Microsoft says NT 5 will provide some S.M.A.R.T support.

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Cables And Termination

In my initial assembly article I suggested a solution for those needing internal wide (Ultrastar and Viking II), narrow (SyJet) and external (CD-ROM) SCSI drives. In this configuration, a single channel controller is in the middle of the SCSI chain and, therefore, cannot accept external drives. Since CD-ROMs are 5.25" drives, and thus do not fit in 3.5" removable enclosures, only external units can be switched between systems. The suggestion was to extend the narrow internal cable to the back of the case and connect the external drive to it, rather than to the external connector on the controller.

In practice, however, this proved impractical—the connector on the cable was such that I could not connect the extended cable to the controller. A better alternative is a dual channel SCSI controller—basically, two controllers in one. Internal drives are on one channel and external drives on another. Such controllers use two interrupts (IRQs), but conveniently permit both mixed internal and external drives. This also improves performance in multi-disk, I/O intensive environments.

Adaptec has a dual version of the AHA2940UW controller but, unfortunately, it is only available for OEMs (integrators who sell full systems). I urged Adaptec to make it available to end users. They said they'd consider the idea, and that if you want one, you should contact them and let them know. For now, however, you will either have to find an alternative (I will be looking at one from Diamond shortly), or find an OEM who offers it.

But if you use internal only, or wide internal and narrow external drive combinations, a single channel controller will do.

The Adaptec controller sets its own termination electronically, based on what it senses is connected to it, but some suggest a more reliable approach, hence the Granite active diagnostics terminator (Listing 1) for the controller (or last external drive).

Factory termination defaults for each drive may be either on or off, and may not always fit your specific drive configuration. That means finding the default in the manual (not always easy) and using jumpers to set it to your needs. This is an error-prone hassle, and a mistake can cause crashes and data loss. Moreover, if the drive configuration changes, you may need to reset the termination.

Kingston makes it easier, by conveniently allowing you to set termination on the enclosures themselves, thus relieving users of taking

continued on page 106

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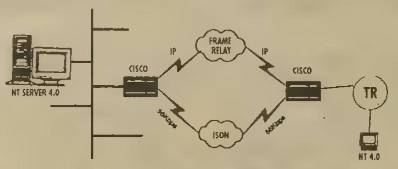

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	Intel Pentium MMX-166	Intel Pentium MMX 200	Intel Pentium MMX-233	Cyrix 686 MX-200	Cyrix 686 MX 233	AMD K6 233
Aristo TX*	$155	$165	$195	$135	$145	$155
ABit PX5-TX*	$170	$180	$210	$150	$160	$170
ASUS TX-P4*	$195	$205	$235	$175	$185	$195

* Comes with 512K Pipe Line Burst Cache & Ball Bearing Heat Sink Fan

Intel Pentium II CPU w/Fan	233	266	300	333	350	400
Abit 440LX (Jumperless)	$310	$360	$465	$595	n/a	n/a
Asus P2L97 (440LX)	$320	$370	$475	$605	n/a	n/a
DFI PII 440BX	$335	$385	$495	$625	$700	$919
DFI LX440	$280	$330	$435	$565	n/a	n/a
Abit 440BX (Jumperless)	$360	$410	$515	$645	$720	$939
Asus 440BX	$375	$425	$530	$660	$735	$954

MAINBOARDS (CPU SOLD SEPARATELY)

ASUS SP97 w/Video	$79
ASUS TX P4 512K (DiMM/SiMM)	$95
ASUS TX97 XE 512K (Dimm/Simm) ATX	$119
ASUS P-II LX97 (440LX) (ATX)	$129
ASUS P-II LX97 w/Adaptec 2940UW (ATX)	$219
ASUS Dual P-II LX97 w/Adaptec 2940UW (ATX)	$335
Asus PII BX 440 100MHz Bus	$172
Aristo P5TX Triton 512K	$58
ABit PX5 TX 512K (Jumperless)	$69
ABit TX5 TX 512K (Jumperless) Supports AMD 266	$85
ABit P-II LX440 (Jumperless)	$109
ABit PII BX440 100MHz Bus	$159
DFI PII BX440 100MHz Bus	$135

CASES / CHASSIS

Desk Top (230W/14.1x15.8x6.5)	$26
Mini Tower (230W/7.1x15.9x13.0)	$18
Med/H Tower (230W/7.1x15.9x14.7)	$23
Medium Tower (230W/6.7x15.8x18.5)	$32
Full Tower (250W/7.5x16.5x24.4)	$42
Super Tower (File Server) 300W, 2Fan, 10 Bays, Wheels (8.7x17.8x26.8) AT ....Special	$115
ATX Med Tower w/PS	$49
ATX Full Tower w/PS	$69/$73
Super Tower (File Server) 300W, 2Fan, 10 Bays, Wheels (8.7x17.8x26.8) ATX	$145

(Black Cases available - see "Black Components")

POWER SUPPLIES

AT PS/2 Slim 250W	$15
AT PS/2 Slim/Full Size 300W	$35/$49
ATX 250W	$31
ATX 300W	$45
2nd Fan w/Ballbearing for Med/Full Tower	$6
P5 Ball Bearing High Speed Fan "Crystal"	$6
Pentium II Heat Sink Fan (BB)	$8

VIDEO CARDS

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S3-Virge 2M/4M EDO PCI	$28/$34
Trident 9680 1M / 2M MPEG PCI	$19/$25
Trident 9680 9685 2M MPEG PCI	$27
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Xpert@Work Rage Pro PCI 4M SGRAM PC2TV	$85
Xpert@Work Rage Pro PCI 8M SGRAM PC2TV	$125
Xpert@Work Rage Pro AGP 4M SGRAM PC2TV	$88
Xpert@Work Rage Pro AGP 8M SGRAM PC2TV	$128
All-In-Wonder Rage II Pro 4M / 8M PCI	$185/$225
All-In-Wonder Rage II Pro 4M / 8M AGP	$199/$229
Xpert@Play Pro 4M/8M PCI	$95/$135
Xpert@Play Pro 4M/8M AGP	$99/$139
Xpert XL 4M PCI/AGP	$70/$80
Diamond (PCI)	
Viper V330 4M SGRAM PCI/AGP	$89
Stealth Fire Pro GL 4M PCI/AGP	$109/$129
Stealth Fire Pro GL 8M PCI/AGP	$145/$169
Stealth 3D Monster 8M Add-on OEM	$195
Matrox (PCI/AGP)	
Millennium II 4M WRAM OEM PCI/AGP	$115
Millennium II 8M WRAM OEM PCI/AGP	$165/$189
M3D 3D-Graphic Add-on (Retail)	$75
G100 (Productiva) 8M AGP ....Special	$78
Millennium II 4M/8M Upgrade Module	$88/$159
Millennium II 12M Upgrade Module	$235

MONITORS

ViewSonic (Authorized Dealer)

Model	Size Viewable	Dot Pitch	Max. Res. @ Ref.(Hz)	Other Features	Price
E655	15 / 13.8	0.28	1280x1024@60		$220
E771	17 / 16.0	0.27	1280x1024@66		$325
G771	17 / 16.0	0.27	1280x1024@65		$359
G773	17 / 16.0	0.26	1280x1024@66	*Special $*	$420
GT775	17 / 16.0	0.25AG	1600x1280@69	SonicTron	$520
PT770	17 / 16.0	0.25AG	1600x1280@69	SonicTron	$555
P775	17 / 16.0	0.25	1600x1280@76		$459
PT775	17 / 16.0	0.25AG	1600x1280@77	SonicTron	$625
G790	19 / 18.0	0.26	1600x1280@76		$680
G800	20 / 18.4	0.28	1600x1280@69	*Special $*	$870
G810	21 / 20.0	0.25	1600x1280@71		$930
P810	21 / 20.0	0.25	1600x1280@72		$1039
PT813	21 / 20.0	0.28AG	1600x1280@85	SonicTron	$1239
P815	21 / 20.0	0.25	1800x1440@72		$1169
EA771B	17/ 16.0	0.27	1280x1024@66	Black/Spkr	$455

14" SVGA NI (.28 1024x768)	$109
14" SVGA NI (.28 1024x768) Digital	$119
15" SVGA NI (.28 1280x1024) Digital	$139
17" SVGA NI (.26 1280x1024) Digital	$249
14" TTL Mono PW (9-Pin)	$75
CTX	
15" VL500 (.28 1280x1024) F/S Dig	$169
17" VL700 (.28 1280x1024) F/S Dig	$309
Cybervision	
15" (.28, 1280x1024)	$149
17" (.27 1280x1024)	$265
NEC	
17" XV17+ (.28 1280x1024 75Hz)	$630
Panasonic (3-Yr Warranty 1-Yr On-site)	
15" S15	$235
17" S70 (.27, 1280x1024) Best Buy	$369
Sony	
15" 100ES	$309
15" 100GS	$339
17' 200ES	$499
17" 200GS / PS	$569/$715

(Black Monitors available - see "Black Components")

H/F CONTROLLERS & I/O

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Special I-Will 2935 UW-SCSI PCI	$99
Adaptec (SCSI Controller Card)	
2940U PCI (OEM)	$139
2940UW PCI (OEM)	$169
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5H Ultra Wide SCSI Cable (48") Extra Long	$30

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IBM 4.3GB Ultra DMA IDE	CALL
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IBM 8.4GB Ultra DMA IDE	$279
IBM 4.3GB Ultra Wide SCSI	$255
Maxtor 4.3GB Ultra DMA IDE	$140
Maxtor 6.4GB Ultra DMA IDE	$189
Maxtor 8.4GB Ultra DMA IDE	$259
Maxtor 11GB Ultra DMA IDE	$365
Samsung 2.1GB EIDE	$119
Samsung 2.5GB Ultra DMA IDE	Call
Samsung 3.4GB Ultra DMA IDE	$129
Samsung 4.3GB Ultra DMA IDE	$139
Seagate 1.2GB EIDE	$99
Seagate 1.7GB EIDE	$109
Seagate 2.1GB EIDE	$118
Seagate 3.2GB Ultra DMA IDE	CALL
Seagate 4.3GB Ultra DMA IDE	CALL
Seagate 4.5GB Ultra Wide SCSI Barracuda	$475
Seagate 9.1GB Ultra Wide SCSI Barracuda	$759
Western Digital 1.2GB EIDE	$115
Western Digital 2.5GB Ultra DMA IDE	$129
Western Digital 3.2GB Ultra DMA IDE	$139
Western Digital 4.3GB Ultra DMA IDE	$149
Western Digital 6.4GB Ultra DMA IDE	$195

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56kbps Int F/D/V (CL-X2)	$48
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USR 56K WinFax Modem (Retail)	$88
USR X² 56K F/D Int/Ext (Retail)	$121/159
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ZIP 100MB IDE Internal w/1 Cartridge	$79
ZIP 100MB SCSI External	$139
Iomega 100MB Zip Cartridge Qty:1 $11 orQty:5+	$10

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PCI (Coax + 10BaseT) 2:1	$13
3COM Etherlink III Combo	
ISA (10BaseT) 3C509T	$53
PCI (10BaseT) 10/100MBPS 3C905T	$56
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32X-IDE: Acer (AOpen) Ultra DMA	$55
32X-IDE: Toshiba	$65
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32X-SCSI: Toshiba	$95
CDR (w/software)	
Sony 2x8 IDE	$299
Teac 4x12 SCSI	$399
DVD	
2X DVD Drive	$125
DVD Mpeg 2 Kit w/RealMagic MPEG2 Card	$225

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Creative Technology	
Sound Blaster 16 Vibra (OEM)	$29
Sound Blaster 32 PnP (OEM)	$52
Sound Blaster AWE64 PnP (Retail) Value	$82
Sound Blaster AWE64 PnP (OEM) ... Best Buy	$58
Sound Blaster 64 Gold (Retail)	$125
Opti Chip 16 IDE Win 95 PnP Comp.	$12
Yamaha 16 IDE Win 95 Comp. w/WaveTable	$13
Altec Lansing Tech. Power Cube Speakers	
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ACS48 Plus 3 Piece System (w/Subwoofer)	$129
ADA305 Suround System (New)	$165
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Amplified Speakers 80-Watt	$8
Amplified Speakers 240-Watt w/3D	$19
Eastern AX4139 Subwoofer 20W w/Satellite Spkr	$38
Eastern AX4106 Subwoofer 25W w/Satellite Spkr	$45

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Logitech (OEM) Black PS2 Mouse	$10
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BLACK COMPONENTS

Cases (Black)	
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Medium w/Door (230W/6.7x15.8x18.5)	$69
Full w/Door (250W/7.5x16.5x24.4)	$89
Super Tower, 300W,2Fan,10Bay,Wheels.	$165
ATX Med w/Sliding Front Panel (250W) #860B	$86
ATX Full w/Sliding Front Panel (250W) #880B	$108
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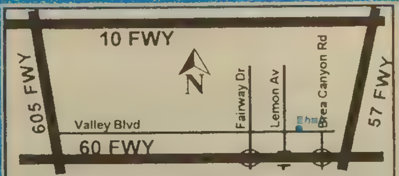
Proton 17" (.27 1280x1024	$439
ViewSonic 17" EA771B (.27 1280x1024) w/Spkr	$455
Floppy Drives (Black)	
Teac 3.5" 1.44MB	$26
CD-ROM Drives (Black)	
Toshiba 24X IDE	$69
Toshiba 32X IDE	$79
Toshiba 32X SCSI	$109
Keyboard (Black)	
Packard Bell 101 (PS2)	$19
Keytronic 104-Key Win95 (AT+PS2)	$39
Micron 105-Key PS2	$22
Mouse (Black)	
Hi-Res Serial	$9
Logitech (OEM) PS2	$10



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continued from apge 102

the drive out (normally, termination is activated by jumpering, but Kingston requires unjumpering, which makes it easy to err by force of habit). The Bay Cooler and Data Port require direct drive termination.

You can simplify your life by having your internal cables terminated with Granite's active terminators too. No matter what the drive configuration is, or how it changes, you can leave all drives (or enclosures) always unterminated (either by default, or you can get drives lacking the termination feature altogether), as the cables will take care of it.

Comments And Recommendations

Since the system in Listing 1 was assembled, it has generally functioned without problems. There was a puzzling quirk at start time: Frequently the system would come on, but the monitor would show an error indicating no signal coming from the video card. Strangely, at that point the Power button would not shut the system down and the power cord had to be unplugged. It would then boot properly on restart.

Since in ATX systems power is controlled via the system board, several potential causes were suggested: The board itself, the power supply, faulty memory, or some incompatibility between it and the system board (which, as I explained in a previous article, is not uncommon with SDRAM).

When the Motherboard Monitor utility showed strange voltage values, suspicion fell on the power supply, but the manufacturer—US Power—questioned this diagnosis, claiming that if the discrepancies were real (see above), there would be a much more serious malfunction; indeed, when CalPC replaced the power supply, the problem persisted.

The problem may have been caused by looseness of the SDRAM module in its slot. It has not reoccurred since reinserting it. Lesson: Systems have become very sensitive to any small quirk; potential sources of problems have increased considerably, and have become more difficult to diagnose, so be prepared for them.

For a drive configuration such as the one recommended, put a 10,000RPM drive in a cooling enclosure. If removability is desired, put a 7,200RPM drive in a Data Port, and removable drives in a Kingston DE-150.

Note that the cable specifications were revised for the dual controller and to add termination to the internal ones.

(I would like to thank Carl Hehn from CalPC, Tom O'Neill from Granite, Steven Lu from CRU, and Andrew Rosas from US Power for their cooperation and help with this article). ◆

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Resources:

32-bit Computing Page
www.microtimes.com/32bitres.html

Tom's Hardware Guide
http://sysdoc.pair.com

The Heatsink Guide
www.isjm.com/tst/heatsink

MotherBoard Monitor (freeware)
Alex van Kaam
www.euronet.nl/users/darkside/mbmonitor

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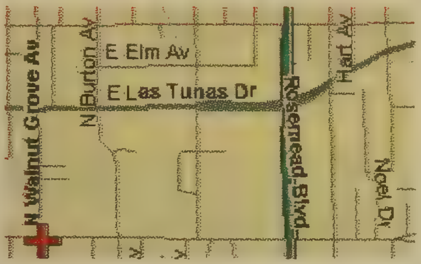

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- Intel LX Chipset MB w/ AGP (BX for 350&400MHz)
- 32 MB SDRAM(PC100 for 350&400MHz)
- 3.2 GB ultra IDE hard drive
- 24x EIDE CD-ROM
- S3 Virge DX 4MB PCI video card
- 15" .28 DP color monitor
- Yamaha 16-bit PnP sound card
- 100 Watt Stereo speakers w/ mic
- 56K v90/Flex internal voice modem
- 1.44 MB floppy drive
- 2 serial, 1 parallel, 2 USB, 1 game port
- 2-button PS/2 mouse
- 104-key Win95 keyboard
- 7-bay medium ATX tower
- Microsoft Windows 95
- Lotus Smartsuite'97 & Grolier's Encyclopedia

PII 233 MHz	$1019
PII 266 MHz	$1067
PII 300 MHz	$1199
PII 333 MHz	$1342
PII 350 MHz	$1515
PII 400 MHz	$1760

Pentium II System 2

- Intel LX Chipset MB w/ AGP (BX for 350&400MHz)
- 64 MB SDRAM(PC100 for 350&400 MHz)
- 4.3 GB ultra IDE hard drive
- 24x EIDE CD-ROM
- S3 Virge DX 4MB PCI video card
- 15" .28 DP color monitor
- Yamaha 16-bit PnP sound card
- 100 Watt Stereo speakers w/ mic
- 56K v90/Flex internal voice modem
- 1.44 MB floppy drive
- 2 serial, 1 parallel, 2 USB, 1 game port
- 2-button PS/2 mouse
- 104-key Win95 keyboard
- 7-bay medium ATX tower
- Microsoft Windows 95
- Lotus Smartsuite'97 & Grolier's Encyclopedia

PII 233 MHz	$1075
PII 266 MHz	$1144
PII 300 MHz	$1276
PII 333 MHz	$1397
PII 350 MHz	$1568
PII 400 MHz	$1811

Pentium II System 3

- Intel LX chipset MB, AGP (BX for 350&400MHz)
- 64 MB SDRAM(PC100 for 350&400MHz)
- 4.3 GB Maxtor ultra IDE hard drive
- Toshiba 32x EIDE CD-ROM
- ATI Xpert@Work 4Mb AGP video
- 17" .28 DP color monitor
- Yamaha 16-bit PnP sound card
- 100 Watt Stereo speakers w/ mic
- Diamond 56K v90/Flex int voice PCI modem
- 1.44 MB floppy drive
- 2 serial, 1 parallel, 2 USB, 1 game port
- 2-button PS/2 mouse
- 104-key Win95 keyboard
- 7-bay medium ATX tower
- Microsoft Windows 95
- Lotus Smartsuite'97 & Grolier's Encyclopedia

PII 233 MHz	$1252
PII 266 MHz	$1316
PII 300 MHz	$1449
PII 333 MHz	$1571
PII 350 MHz	$1744
PII 400 MHz	$2001

Pentium II System 4

- Asus MB w/ Intel LX Chipset (BX for 350&400MHz)
- 64 MB SDRAM(PC100 for 350&400MHz)
- 6.4 GB Maxtor ultra IDE hard drive
- Toshiba 32x EIDE CD-ROM
- ATI Xpert@Work 4Mb AGP video
- 17" Optiquest V775 .26 DP color monitor
- Creative Labs AWE 64 soundcard
- Satellite speakers w/ subwoofer
- Diamond 56K v90/Flex int voice PCI modem
- 1.44 MB floppy drive
- 2 serial, 1 parallel, 2 USB, 1 game port
- Logitech Firstmouse+ PS/2 mouse w/ wheel
- 104-key Win95 keyboard
- Enlight 7-bay tool-less medium ATX tower
- Microsoft Windows 95
- Lotus Smartsuite'97 & Grolier's Encyclopedia

PII 233 MHz	$1608
PII 266 MHz	$1672
PII 300 MHz	$1809
PII 333 MHz	$1928
PII 350 MHz	$2104
PII 400 MHz	$2361

Pentium System 1

- Intel TX Chipset motherboard
- 32 MB SDRAM
- 2.1 GB IDE hard drive
- 24x EIDE CD-ROM
- S3 Virge DX 4MB PCI
- 15" .28 DP color monitor
- Yamaha 16-bit PnP sound card
- 240Watt Stereo speakers w/ mic
- 56K V90/Flex internal voice modem
- 1.44 MB floppy drive
- 2 serial, 1 parallel, 2 USB, 1 game port
- 2-button PS/2 mouse
- 104-key Win95 keyboard
- 8-bay meium AT tower
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Intel P166 MMX	$806
Intel P200 MMX	$810
Intel P233 MMX	$847
AMD K6 200 MHz	$796
AMD K6 233 MHz	$812

Pentium System 2

- Intel TX Chipset motherboard
- 64 MB SDRAM
- 3.2 GB ultra IDE hard drive
- 24x EIDE CD-ROM
- S3 Virge PCI video
- 15" .28 DP color monitor
- Yamaha 16-bit PnP sound card
- 240Watt Stereo speakers w/ mic
- 56K V90/Flex internal voice modem
- 1.44 MB floppy drive
- 2 serial, 1 parallel, 2 USB, 1 game port
- 2-button PS/2 mouse
- 104-key Win95 keyboard
- 8-bay medium AT tower
- Microsoft Windows 95
- Lotus Smartsuite'97 & Grolier's Encyclopedia

Intel P166 MMX	$881
Intel P200 MMX	$884
Intel P233 MMX	$922
AMD K6 200 MHz	$871
AMD K6 233 MHz	$887

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Iomega Zip Ext Parallel	$134
Iomega Zip Ext SCSI	$145
Iomega Zip Int IDE	$78
Iomega JAZ Int SCSI	$257

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Enlight AT medium	$60
Enlight ATX medium	$68
Generic AT medium	$50
Generic ATX medium	$60
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CD-ROMs

Generic 24x int IDE	$48
Generic 32x int IDE	$55
Toshiba 24x int IDE	$62
Toshiba 32x int IDE	$68
Toshiba 32x int SCSI	$100
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Floppy

Mitsumi 1.44 MB	$18

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8.4 UDMA	$269
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6.4 IDE	$211

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PC100 128 MB	$189
PC100 64 MB	$95
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32 MB SDRAM	$34

Modems

Diamond 56K int PCI modem	$64
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Generic 56K int X2	$54

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Optiquest V775	$440
Amptron 17"	$275
Amptron 15"	$154
Amptron 14"	$127

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Asus P2B	$175
Asus P2L97	$135
Abit BX6	$160
Abit LX6	$115
Otto LX MB	$99

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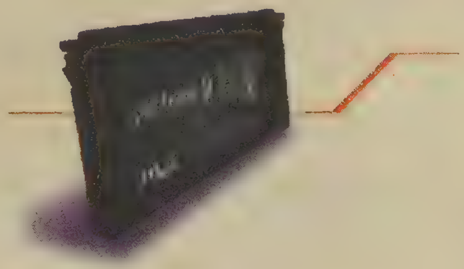

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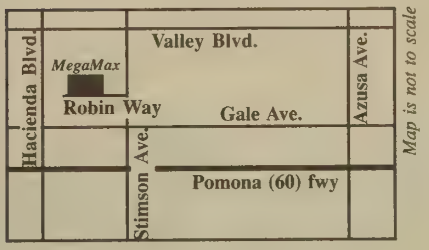

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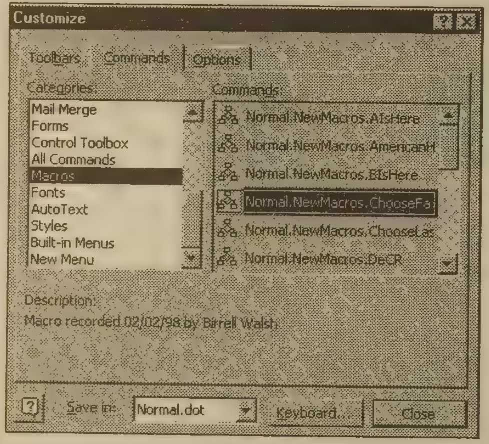
Treasure In The Caves Of Word

Finding Useful Things Buried In Menus

By Birrell Walsh

Macros let you automate things you do all the time. The macro recorder allows you to record any sequence of keystrokes and menu choices. You can then rerun them all later by just playing back the macro.



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Macro recorded 02/02/98 by Birrell Walsh

Save in: Normal.dot

Recently I was watching my wife format a table for her program when she turned the print 90 degrees. "I didn't know you could do that in Word," I said.

This set me to wondering about all the possibilities we have in Word 97 that we may not yet have discovered. What chests of gold are hidden there?

I have used the program for years without exploring its possibilities. I basically have been using Word as a text processor, with an occasional dollop of formatting. I always knew that there was more to learn, features that might save me time or make new things possible. I told myself that someday I would explore the caves. I just never had the time.

So that is the question this month: What lurks at the bottom of the Word menus? Expert users will know about all of these features, of course—but many are new to most of us as we go spelunking.

Useful Books

I called some of the publishers of computer books and asked them what they had on Word for Windows. First to respond was Peachpit Press with their *Visual Quickstart Guide For Word For Windows*. It was from that document that I discovered some of the simpler timesavers I've been neglecting all these years.

Then a bundle arrived from Microsoft Press. My favorite among their offerings was *Microsoft Word 97 At A Glance* by Jerry Joyce and Marianne Moon. This is just the sort of book that should be included with Word when you buy it—a highly visual, well-indexed guide to features. They also sent along *Quick Course In Microsoft Word 97* and *Step By Step Microsoft Word 97*. The latter two are course books that take you through graduated lessons. *Step By Step*, it says, "provides complete preparation for the Certified Microsoft Office User Proficient exam."

Macros

It would be worthwhile to have your copy of Word 97 open while reading this column, as this month we are strictly hands-on.

The first and most useful thing to learn is the macro recorder. It allows you to record any sequence of keystrokes and menu choices. You can then rerun them all later by just playing back the macro. Macros let you automate things you do all the time. One of my first macros typed just my name and address, but they can do a lot more.

I often go back and forth between my fax program (currently Procomm Plus 32) and my sturdy little HP LaserJet 6L. Word thinks of the fax program as another printer, so I am forever opening up the File menu, going to print, changing to the fax program or the desktop printer, and then closing up again. This is the ideal sort of problem to solve with macros.

The macro recorder lives in a side cave of the Tools menu. That is, you click on Tools on the main menu. When the dropdown menu presents itself, choose "Macro." Another menu will pop out to the side, and on it is "Record New Macro." The macro recorder will ask you what you want to call your macro. You can choose any name without spaces (or some other special characters) in it, so it is wise to use a very descriptive name. I will call my printer-switching macros "ChooseFaxForPrinting" and "ChooseLaserJet ForPrinting."

Once you have chosen a macro name and hit return, a small icon that looks like the buttons on a cassette recorder appears on the screen. That means you are recording, so you can begin doing the things you want to be part of the macro. For this printer-selection macro you then go to the file menu, choose print, change the printer to the fax program, and then "close." That's all there is to the macro, so you hit the stop button on the recorder. The recorder buttons disappear, and the macro is finished. (You will be asked if you want to "save changes to the global template" when you quit Word—that is an oblique way of asking if you want to keep your macro. Say yes.)

Now you can record a second macro to change printers to the LaserJet.

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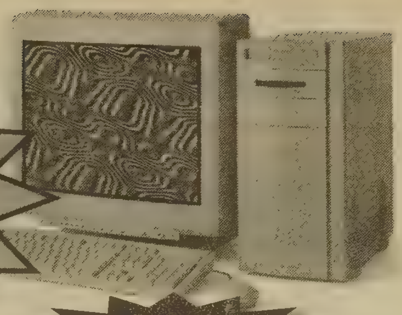

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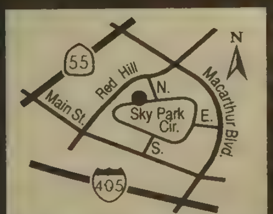

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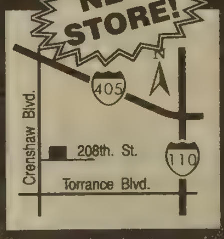

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continued from page 94

Button It, Then Menu It

Now we have two useful macros. How do we get them where we can use them?

Another side-menu to the Tools menu is "Customize." It is a bit complex, but so useful that it's worth the effort.

There are three tabs in "Customize." One shows and hides toolbars. Some of those toolbars are provided by Word—the drawing toolbar and such. But there are some "custom" toolbars as well, toolbars you can fill with your own commands. If you check the box beside one of the custom toolbars, an empty toolbar will appear from nowhere. You can drag it to the top of your screen and place it with the toolbars that are already there.

A second tab in "Customize" is "Commands." This gives you access to most of Word's commands—and to your macros. If you choose "Macros" in the "Categories" window, you will see all of your macros. Among them will be the newly made "ChooseFaxForPrinting" and "ChooseLaserJetForPrinting."

Now comes the fun part. Drag these two macros to the toolbar you have just created and drop them. As soon as you close "Customize" they will be functioning buttons.

But first you may want to rename them. They tend to have ghastly long names like "Normal.NewMacros.ChooseFaxForPrinting." That is Word's internal way of thinking of your macro, but you can change the name on the button. While "Customize" is still open, right-click on the name on the button. A menu of options will drop down, and one of them is "Name." Edit the name until you like it. I use "Fax for printing" and "LaserJet for printing." Voila! You have now created a custom toolbar!

You can also create a new menu. Menus are nice because they do not clutter up your toolbar area. Here's how you make one.

Go to "Tools" then choose "Customize," then select the tab "Commands." At the very bottom of the Categories window is "New Menu." If you choose "New Menu" in Categories, "New Menu" will also appear in the Commands window to the right of the Categories window. Drag this "New Menu" up on the menu bar—not the toolbar—and release it. Now there is a menu item called "New Menu." You can rename it as you would a button: Right click on it while "Customize" is open, and change the name. I use the title "My Macros."

Of course, an empty new menu is not much use to you. You can add items to this menu the same way you add items to a tool bar. Open "Commands" while in "Customize," select "Macros," and choose the macro you want on your menu. Then drag it up to the menu bar. A small grey space will open below the menu item. Drop your macro there. You can do that with as many macros and other commands as you may want on the menu. You also rename these commands on the menu bar as you rename them on the toolbar, by right-clicking while in "Customize" and editing the name.

So in a few minutes of spelunking you have created macros and put them on toolbars and the menu.

Is It A Table, Or Is It An Invoice?

Now for another cave.

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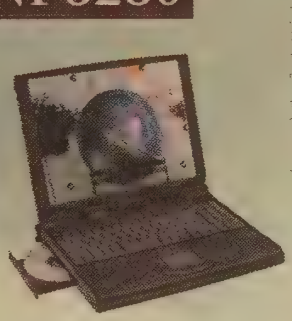

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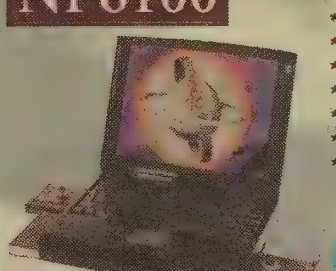

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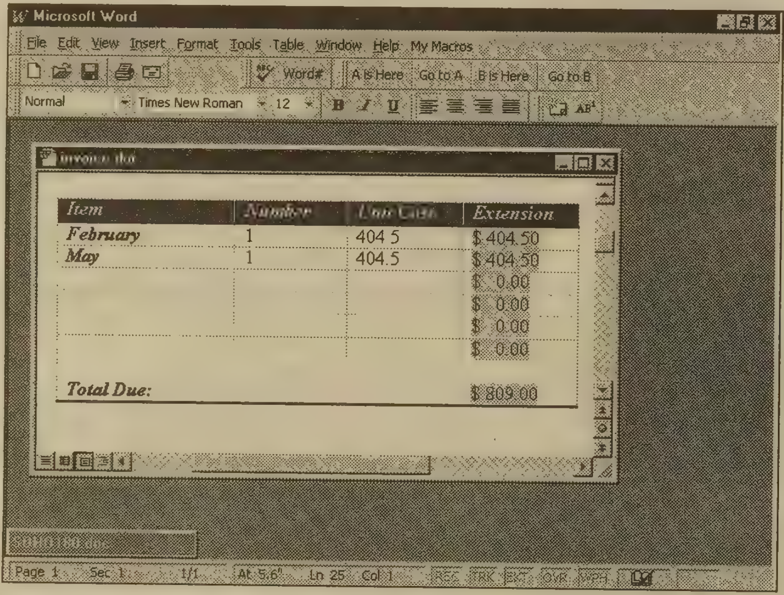
visit our web site: **www.notebook-pc.com** cells by right-clicking on a cell. A floating menu will appear and allow you to change alignment in the cell (left, center or right), to add bullets, and to change the text direction. The latter is wonderful for turning headings on their side above a table.

But there are other abilities hidden in tables. Microsoft is, after all, the maker of the spreadsheet Excel. Even if you do not embed a full worksheet, the "Table" in Word draws on the same technology as that used in Excel. In particular, you can do formulas, and that means you can make invoices that semi-automatically total themselves.



Item	Number	Unit Cost	Extension
February	1	404 5	$ 404.50
May	1	404.5	$ 404.50
			$ 0.00
			$ 0.00
			$ 0.00
			$ 0.00
Total Due:			$ 809.00

I made a small table of data to try this out. I created a table of five rows and four columns. I labeled the columns "Items," "Unit Cost," "Number," and "Extension." I left a blank row at the bottom, and filled in some numbers in the "Unit Cost" and "Number" cells. So far this is just a standard Word table.

It became a mini-spreadsheet when I went to the empty cells at the right and opened up the "Table" menu. Near the bottom of this menu is an easy-to-miss choice, "Formula." If you choose that, a box will open with a proposed formula. When you choose the cell along the right side of a table, the offered formula is usually "=SUM(LEFT)." I replaced that default with "=PRODUCT(LEFT)." If you do this, your right-hand cell now holds the product of all the figures to the left of it—that is, the product of the "Items," "Unit Cost," and "Number." Since "Items" will just be names, not numbers, the product will be the "Number" times the "Unit Cost," or the "Extension." You can recalculate these values at any time by selecting the cell and pressing F9.

Now I want a total for these extensions. I put the cursor in the blank row, in the cell under the extensions. The formula I put in this cell is "=SUM(ABOVE)." It will add all the extensions above it.

Here we run into one of the limitations of Word's mini-spreadsheet. Excel would know to calculate all the extensions before it calculates the total. The Word spreadsheet isn't that bright. We need to calculate the extensions by selecting them, pressing F9, and then selecting the totals cell and hitting F9 again. It is, frankly, a pain.

But wait. We can make a macro to do it!

You need to have a way to select the "Extension" and "Totals" cells no matter where your cursor is when you begin. Bookmarks will do that.

When you "Go to..." a bookmark, the target cell or cells end up selected. The first step is to make a bookmark that refers to the Extensions. Select the "Extension" cells, then go to the "Insert" menu. Choose "Bookmark," and type "Extensions" as the name for the bookmark. Then create a bookmark for the "Totals" cell in the same way.

Turn on the macro recorder. Name the macro "Recalc". Now go to the "Insert" menu, choose "Bookmark" and select the "Extensions" bookmark. Hit "Go to..." and all the Extension cells will be selected. Hit F9 and they will recalculate. Then go to the "Insert" menu, select "Bookmark", then "Totals" and "Go to..." again. This time the Totals cell will be selected. Hit F9 again. Now the totals will be recalculated on the basis of the refigured extension cells. Turn off the Macro Recorder.

You can put this "Recalc" macro on a button or a menu—and of course you know how to do that from spelunking in the macro menus.

You can format the invoice to be more attractive by using "AutoFormat" from the Table menu. Experiment until you like the look. Then save the document as a template (say as "Invoice.dot"). Why? Because then you can choose "Invoice" as a template for any new document. Just fill it in and get those bills out on time.

What Did We Find In The Caves Of Word?

First, visiting the "Tools" menu we learned to record a macro. Then we learned to put macros on a toolbar-button or on a menu of our own.

We turned to the "Table" menu and built an invoice that calculates extensions and totals—without using Excel. Finally, we created a macro to automate the recalculations.

If you are like me, you may have begun this exploration with no idea of the possibilities built into Word. And there is more.

Next month we will go down the "Insert" menu to put a watermark on your pages, and discover how to index and summarize documents automatically. Bring your caving helmet and ropes—there's more treasure down there. ◆

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> *Even if you do not embed a full Excel worksheet, the "Table" in Word draws on the same technology as that used in Excel. In particular, you can do formulas, and that means you can make invoices that semi-automatically total themselves.*

Resources:

Visual Quickstart Guide For Word For Windows, $15.95
Peachpit Press
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www.peachpit.com

Microsoft Word 97 At A Glance
By Jerry Joyce and Marianne Moon
Quick Course In Microsoft Word 97, $14.99
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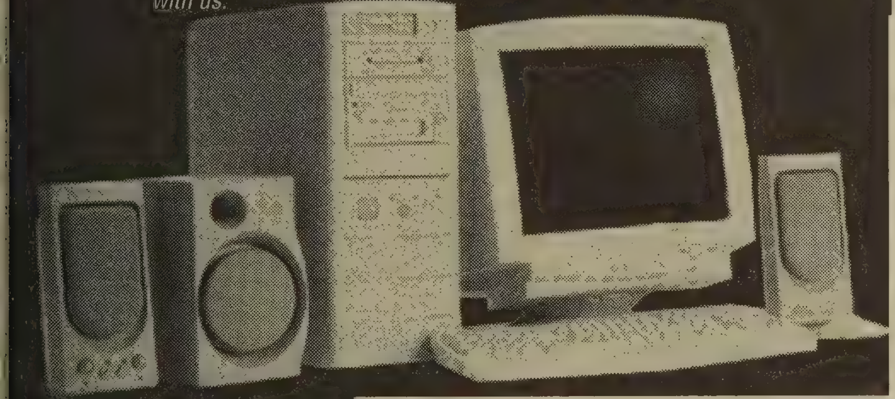

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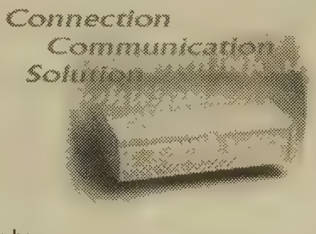

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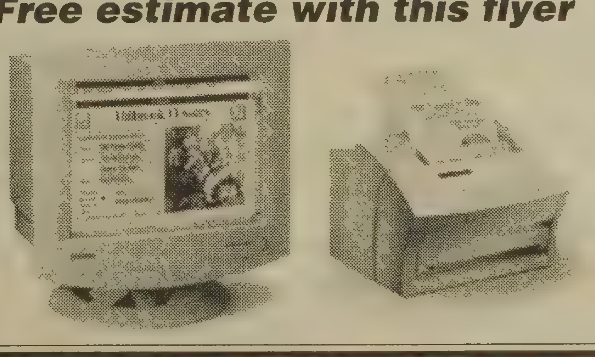

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High-End Accounting Software For Windows 95/NT

By David A. Simon, CPA and Jennifer R. Cherniss

> The study supports widely held skepticism that, even for the latest generation of packages, the quality doesn't seem to match the price.

The latest generation of the best-selling, high-end, Windows 95/NT-based accounting software does more than the DOS packages they replace, and some deficiencies have been eliminated. But shortcomings do remain, and vendor claims aren't always reliable.

That is the thrust of a major academic study published in the March, 1998, *Journal of Accountancy*. The principal investigators include Professor Harley M. Courtney, accounting professor and director of the Center for Accounting Software Evaluation at the University of Texas, Arlington; an assistant professor of accounting at Texas Wesleyan University; and a doctoral candidate at the University of Texas.

The 17-page report considers nine packages: AccPac, Great Plains Dynamics, Impact Encore, MAS 90, Progression, SBT Pro, Solomon, Traverse, and Visual Accounting.

Accounting installations of this type might contain a half-dozen modules totaling several thousand dollars. As a typical example, the Great Plains Dynamic multi-user version lists for $3,000 for the system manager plus $1,000-$2,000 per module. Single user versions cost less than half that.

The study supports widely held skepticism that, even for the latest generation of packages, the quality doesn't seem to match the price.

Independence And Objectivity

Every few years the Center performs a comprehensive accounting software evaluation. The current one is again headed by Professor Courtney.

The previous study, published in 1995, looked at 15 high-end DOS based packages, concluding that all were "seriously deficient." The emergence of Windows 95 versions has rendered that report outdated.

Still, many businesses continue to use the DOS platform for their accounting system. Little high-end software was developed to run under Windows 3.1, partly because 3.1 was transitional, and also because it was not sufficiently stable for mission-critical accounting applications. For similar reasons, the new generation of accounting software is aimed more toward NT rather than Windows 95, although many will run on both.

Having leapt from ancient DOS to the Windows 95/NT environment in a single bound, vendors had the opportunity to start afresh, rather than continuing to Band-Aid old source code. In some instances, however, entrenched patterns from days of yore have been carried forward.

The Texas team's analysis, having been prepared for CPAs and a professional publication, ventures into more critical territory than the typical review found in the popular press. Instead of awards and scale-of-one-to-ten ratings, the focus is on technical deficiencies.

Not all invited vendors participated in the current study. Some have no Windows 95 release yet. Platinum Software's DOS entry had been raked over the coals in the 1995 study, and they reportedly failed to answer researcher's inquiries about Platinum for Windows.

Half Of What You See

In response to preliminary survey questions some vendors seemed to answer whatever they thought sounded good. "It appears," the study reports, "that some respondents worked on the assumption that a 'yes' answer reflected well on their product."

However, the report explains, "when we asked for [follow-up] details… it became apparent that not only did the products lack these functions but also the representatives were not familiar with the technology—yet they responded affirmatively anyway."

These observations highlight the importance of seeking objective, critical analysis of these products, prepared independent from the vendors and their PR agencies.

Audit Trails

Accounting software should provide a competent audit trail—the record of ledgers and journals permitting auditors to form supportable opinions about financial statements.

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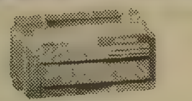

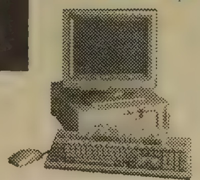

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In any accounting system, users need to be able to trace transactions from source documents (such as invoices), to the original transaction entries (journals), to account listings (ledgers), and ultimately to financial reports; or to start with the reported amounts and track back to the original documents.

> The new generation of accounting software is aimed more toward NT rather than Windows 95, although many will run on both.

The details of how audit trails are managed in computerized accounting systems are complex, and will be covered here only in a few examples of deficiencies.

Typically, accounting information is passed to users in hardcopy format, for ease of use or documentation purposes.

Macola's Progression, however, does not print the general ledger. It permits only a screen display of the transactions recorded in a single general ledger account. For example, if you want to know what's gone into legal and professional services to make the balance so large, you'll have to scroll through the screen and do without hardcopy.

Great Plains Dynamics, MAS 90, Solomon, and Traverse provide an inventory ledger in both units and dollar values, as accountants would want. AccPac, however, provides dollar values only, and Visual Accounting lists only units, without dollar values.

The initial entry of a transaction in an accounting system is made to a journal. The Courtney study indicates that, while most of the packages provide generally satisfactory journals, Great Plains Dynamics and MAS 90 do not. Great Plains prints journals only by batch number; it will not print the journals by user-specified date, by transaction entry session, or by reporting period. MAS 90 prints journals for the general ledger module only, which may be unacceptable for many users.

The user should be able to generate a report sorting by some reference number so the desired item can be readily located. You shouldn't have to search for a needle of a transaction in a haystack of accounting reports in order to find an entry once you know the entry number.

But in many cases the software will not print reports that are sorted by the criteria (such as voucher number) being used as a cross reference.

For example, SBT Pro allows the user to enter a voucher number to trace from vendor accounts to the purchase journal, but it creates no voucher number when the purchase is recorded. Neither is there a voucher number field in either the purchase journal or in the vendor ledger. You obviously can't sort by voucher number if there is no field for it.

Impact Encore and MAS 90 rely on invoice number to trace from sales entries in the accounts receivable ledger to the sales journal. With this approach, if using hardcopy, the user must somewhat randomly scan to find the relevant journal.

The good news in the study is that Windows 95/NT versions of AccPac and Macola no longer delete journal entries from the hard drive when the program sorts them into accounts, as was a problem in the DOS packages from those publishers.

The report suggests that software developers don't always seem fully knowledgeable about how audit trails are used. While a few packages, such as Solomon, were well regarded in the audit trail department, the report concludes that most were "disappointing."

Report Capabilities

The end product of accounting software is accounting reports, including financial statements. The three basic financial statements are the income statement, balance sheet, and statement of cash flows (reporting sources and uses of money). The proper form of the cash flow statement is dictated by official accounting pronouncements.

Among the new generation of Windows 95/NT accounting packages, the following produce cash flow statements: Great Plains Dynamics, MAS 90, Progression, SBT Pro, Traverse, and Visual Accounting. However, the report complains that none comply fully with standard accounting practices.

For example, all the developers except Visual Accounting indicated that funds coming from fixed asset dispositions were netted against money spent to acquire new assets—a clearly improper practice.

When the authors asked vendors "to show how their products produced the actual cash flow with the disposition of a fixed asset at a gain or loss, none could."

Of the packages considered, AccPac, Impact Encore, and Solomon generate no general ledger reports. Instead, the customer must develop the reports using low-level programming commands, or purchase a report writer from a third party vendor. Most users, of course, will buy the third party enhancement.

This seems to be a carryover from DOS days. When microcomputer accounting packages were being developed and marketed during the 1980s, they had limited capabilities, the market was relatively small, and printers and fonts were not standardized. Third party vendors naturally came along to fill the void between you and your daisy wheel. Eventually, since this niche was apparently of no interest to Bill Gates, they became entrenched.

The Courtney report observes that with Windows NT versions, most vendors are keeping the same report generating arrangements as their DOS programs. If you're already used to dealing with third-party reporting tools, this shouldn't present a serious disappointment. But it just doesn't seem right to have to purchase software for routine financial reports from a third party, having already paid thousands for an elaborate accounting suite.

System Security

System security and effective internal controls are obvious business necessities. Yet, the study points out considerable disparities in the effectiveness of the programs' security features. The study analyzes access controls, data security, and processing controls.

continued on page 214

> The investigation of data security concludes, "Failure by this segment of the accounting software industry to include encryption is a significant shortcoming."

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Scene Stealing At The Digital Corral

Digital Showbiz Now! | By Jonathan E.

"Digital showbiz" is one of those industry buzz phrases that always leaves me unsatisfied. The imagery of the expression implies so much more than it seems to currently deliver. Puzzled and puzzling, I wonder what it really means.

Let's examine those two words, "digital" and "showbiz," alone and in combination. Let's also take a look at what children of today are learning about the new world of digital media manipulation from Kid Pix Studio Deluxe, the newest multimedia version of a program that may not be a full-fledged professional tool, but is surely training the next generation in principles of interactivity and multimedia techniques.

Of course, it's no surprise that the two great dream and fortune factories of the Twentieth Century should spark excited responses as they flirt with each other and attempt to figure out the mechanics of an actual mating. It will be dramatic as new fortunes and stars are made while old fortunes are dissipated, along with a has-been or two.

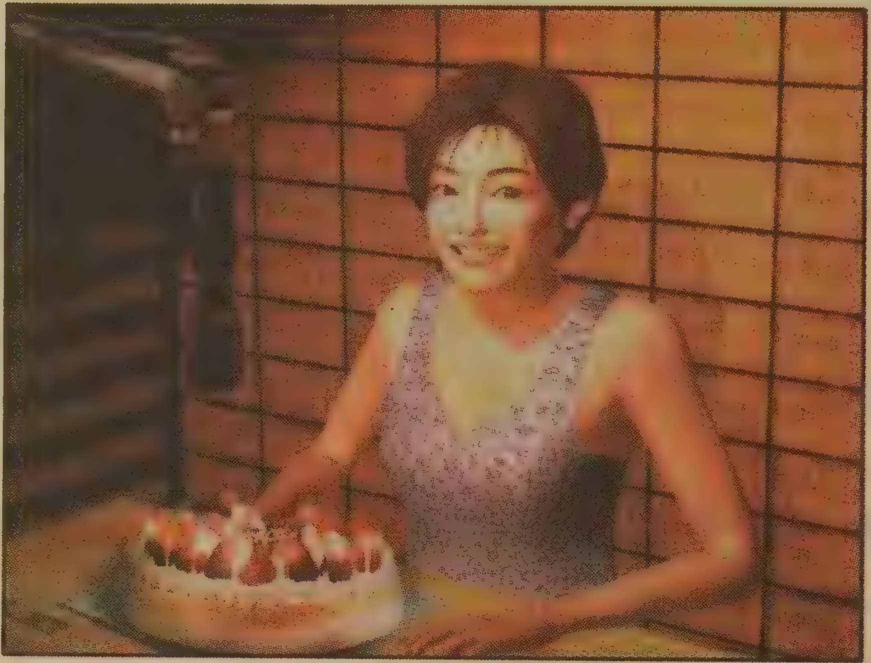
Beyond the financial frisson, new creative forms will, hopefully, be discovered that express artistic insight into human nature beyond its tendency to crave information for money-making activities and the propensity of some to blow away everything on the screen—the two apparently successful killer apps that have so far emerged for multimedia.

Digital Showbiz Today

It's true that just about every Hollywood movie produced these days uses digital techniques for increasingly flashy and spectacular special effects. As has been often noted, many of these movies offer nothing beyond the thrill of these effects; the traditional concerns of drama, plot and character development are absent, blown to smithereens by the contemporary equivalent of the Roman circus.

I suppose it is "show," and all reports also point to "biz." But it's also true that many of these special effects begin with traditional techniques, such as model-making, and are only augmented by digital dazzle.

Some movies are more subtle, using digital synthespians to reanimate historically dead characters in scenes with the still living. Today, these remain only relatively primitive examples of synthespianism, being mostly cameo roles and relying on well-known real characters to evoke ready-made awe and suspend disbelief in the already established Pavlovian manner. Savvy agents routinely protect the future digital reproduction of their famous clients, while trade visionaries project that in the future there will be digital development of entirely artificial characters, no doubt based on the results of extensive market research with focus groups.



Kyoko Date: Japan's entirely fabricated female star.

This, in fact, is already the case with some characters found on children's CD-ROMs, some of whom are now also migrating to television. The path from television to the computer screen is already well-worn from the frequent treks of various personalities, carbon-based and created 'toons, since the early days of the digital multimedia gold rush. Japan has already gone beyond the manufacture and packaging of mere humans as pop stars to entirely fabricating Kyoko Date, a female star who received the adulation of thousands of young males, all of whom were reputed to be carbon-based. And, of course, there's the famous dancing baby who boogies across the TV screen at inopportune moments for Ally McBeal.

Television commercials expose an even bigger audience to a wide range of digital production techniques on a daily basis. Creation of believable commercial characters pitching the product has, of course, been a stock-in-trade of advertising since even before the advent of electronic communication of any kind. Other elements of television programming, particularly news and weather reports along with titles and intro creation, use digital production as a basic tool.

In the world of music, digital production (both in the actual recording and mixing processes and in the creation of sound), as with sampling and synthesizers, has become commonplace over the past two decades. Tape blocks for splicing tape have become antiquities, signs of a craft as it was once practiced, commented upon, when seen in a modern studio, much as you might note a typewriter on a writer's desk.

However, all these activities so often associated with digital showbiz—special effects, character creation, commercials, music making—were important parts of showbiz before digital techniques; they're not inherently digital, whatever their current manifestations or industry infatuation. I think of them only as tools, as part of the process, not a complete package. What's really important about them is that they integrate into an already existing industry, rather than stand on their own; they're an evolution rather than the hypster's revolution.

When I hear the words "digital" and "showbiz" together, I expect the show itself, the actual delivery, to be digital—with all that that implies. Besides music CDs, the audience still receives traditional showbiz products overwhelmingly in traditional analog ways. DVDs may also be about to become the physical digital carriers for movies, much as CDs are for music, but there's still a lot of old-fashioned physical messing around involved with distribution and retailing, even in those digital formats.

Besides that, a traditional movie or music CD is still a pretty linear experience, with relatively low interactivity. In essence, choosing to watch it, or not, or jump to a different track, is about as binary as the experience gets. The word "digital" implies some greater degree of interactivity with the material or audience control of the content than that.

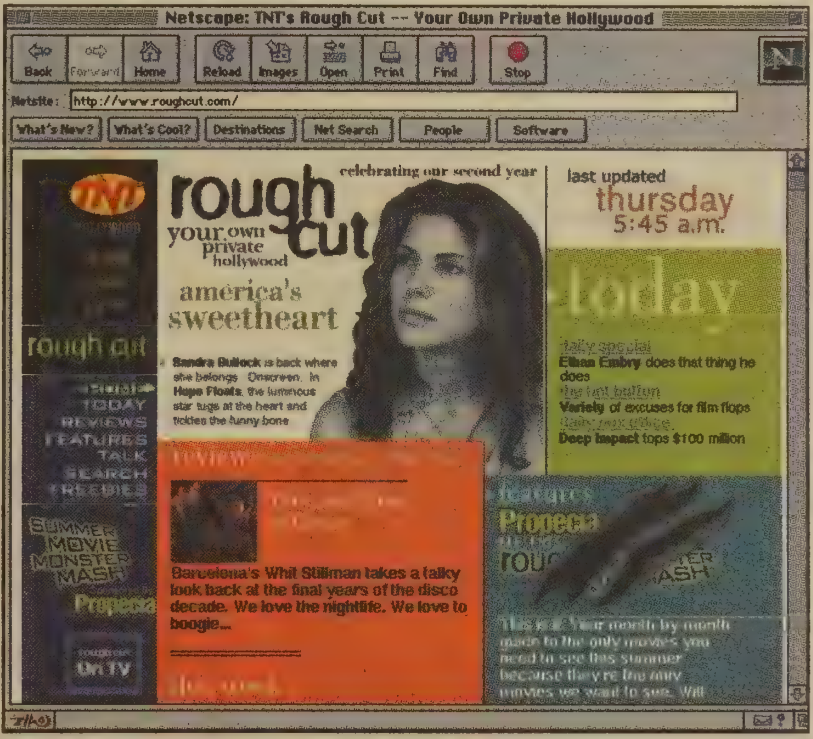
Some may argue that the Web is today's digital showbiz, with its legions of fan sites devoted to various TV shows and other aspects of the American cultural experience, not to mention all its promotional sites for movies and books and, of course, its sports sites and music sites, bravely attempting to convince us that it's pleasant to listen to really bad audio—not to mention the Web's star-like tendency to hog society's spotlight.

There is some truth to the Web being today's manifestation of digital showbiz, but it's mostly ancillary stuff rather than the show itself; it's more like digital amateur theatrics—and there's still that nagging question of just where the biz is when it comes to content on the Web. Certainly there are isolated examples of profitable sites, but they're few and far between and tend to cater to very specialized tastes. In the real world, it's often a bad showbiz career move to work in those sorts of places, particularly if someone unscrupulous gets his hands on the negatives.

The Digital Showbiz of the Future

Digital television is the great hope for legitimate digital showbiz, somewhere out there on the horizon. In the short term, I pity the poor executive who must make the right choices about programming, equipment, resolution, and use of available bandwidth.

Well, I pity him as an individual; as a class, the broadcasting industry is feeding off the fat of the public's spectrum and can barely go wrong. There's a great big piñata full of goodies just waiting to be broken open by the wildly flailing, blindfolded corporate beneficiaries of the FCC's decision to remove spectrum from smaller community stations and reassign it for free to those upstanding stations that serve the political status quo, those corporate citizens of the national entertainment state, as it has so piquantly been called. The only consolation is that it's going to be grand entertainment watching them all blindfolded together, flailing around and clobbering each other as they thresh for the piñata's prizes. The outcome of the myriad of technical, creative, financial, and political decisions involved with getting digital televison off the ground and into the air will be unknown for several years. The promise is that we'll get some form of synchronized Web (or other digital medium) and TV content, along with higher resolution. The question of whether this will be genuinely useful information or just better ways to be good little consumers, readily marketed to on the mythical one-to-one basis, is theoretically open.



Sandra Bullock is back where she belongs. Onscreen. In **Hope Floats**, the luminous star tugs at the heart and tickles the funny bone

Ethan Embry does that thing he does

Variety of excuses for film flops

Deep Impact tops $100 million

Barcelona's Whit Stillman takes a talky look back at the final years of the disco decade. We love the nightlife. We love to boogie...

[illegible] month by month guide to the only movies you need to see this summer because they're the only movies we want to see. Will

The Web as digital showbiz: fan sites devoted to movies and TV shows (like TNT's Rough Cut—a TV show about movies) abound.

Personally, I doubt that the public will genuinely benefit; perhaps we'll get some better circuses, but most of the bread will go to corporate and business interests. However, this is the currently favored Holy Grail of digital showbiz, the combined talents of the multimedia and entertainment industries.

It's worth noting that this is the real reason behind the current efforts to unseat Microsoft as king of the operating-system-and-software hill. While its dominance of the computer industry as it exists now is certainly questionable, the present situation is really just a prologue to the real prize for Microsoft, controlling all those set-top boxes and taking a slice out of every transaction in the great American entertainment economy. Not only that, but to some extent Microsoft's ability to control the content of the future, to participate in the process of shaping public opinion, is the threat that the ungainly alliance of the Department of Justice, various states, and wanna-be silicon players is attempting to strategically head-off.

Behind the Scenes At The Kid Pix Studio

Panning, tracking, zooming, cutting (whatever it is) from the big to the small picture, it's obvious that the digital showbiz of the future will need workers and artists who are familiar with the techniques of new media language and manipulation. It's generally recognized that the language of film and its ability to artistically tell a story advanced dramatically when Orson Welles made *Citizen Kane*, several decades after cinema first emerged. A similar situation exists in multimedia.

One of the problems with interactive multimedia is that it hasn't been very good at telling a story artistically; its language has not been sufficiently developed. Those who've labored at it so hard grew up in an earlier world when media behaved differently. They didn't assimilate the techniques of interactivity in their most plastic years of childhood, but rather set out to learn them in their adult years. Perhaps one reason why games are relatively advanced in their use of interactivity is that many of those working in the field really played games in their earlier years and thus practiced their skills.

The new version of Kid Pix Studio Deluxe is, in effect, a media language kit to allow children to experiment with media manipulation. Earlier versions of the program let children paint with some wild and wacky brushes, play with digital puppets, record their voices, and present slide shows of their work. All valuable skills in the multimedia world and great fun, but relatively basic and, dare I say it, requiring children to create from scratch rather than take something already existing and manipulate it.

The new version, however, adds a few extra features that, while mostly not spectacular individually, cumulatively add up to a rather interesting package, enhancing skills that any media manipulator of tomorrow will need.

On the multimedia front, the big news is that you can now type words into your pictures, pull down the menu and hear them! And in a variety of voices from instruments like bells and cellos, to attitudes like bad news or deranged, to a variety of human characters. Typed text can also be edited without changing the picture underneath and the text can be formatted. Obviously, children could get into all sorts of trouble typing in dirty words just to hear how they sound in different voices, but there is something extremely appealing about the idea in principle, and it exemplifies the concept of digital media being able to change from one form to another, almost by magic.

Kid Pix Studio Deluxe: Media manipulation and interactivity for our future artists.

Many of Kid Pix Studio Deluxe's features take advantage of digital manipulation in less profound but still interesting ways. All the visual effects, from the different screens of the Wacky TV to the kaleidoscopic Electric Mixer of Kid Pix itself (the central painting element of the program) to the animations of the puppets via the keyboard, are basically pretty simple digital techniques of moving pixels. Once children understand the principles behind them, they'll come up with all sorts of new ideas on their own.

Whether they'll be able to implement them in Kid Pix is questionable. It's a limited program; many of its effects and features are not available in all its modules. But that's rather like the real world—you have to learn to work around the limitations. However, in Kid Pix, there are some easy-to-figure-out things to do with graphics that are not in the manual and produce some interesting effects.

Beyond that, this new version comes with lots of clip art of various kinds—backdrops, cut-outs, rubber stamps—that can be manipulated in all sorts of ways, just like the real graphics world. There are also clip sounds, although your ability to manipulate those is limited to selecting them. In addition, you can now import photos and graphics from other sources, like PhotoCD and the Internet, and export them or attach them to email.

I am skeptical of much of the hype about digital showbiz, I am skeptical of the projected future ruled by new forms of media—but I have no doubt that some child who's playing with Kid Pix Studio Deluxe today, and gaining experience at an early age with other forms of media manipulation and interactivity, will figure out how to tell effective stories with these new techniques and will create the interactive equivalent of *Citizen Kane*. It'll probably be the story of Bill Gates. I just wonder what his Rosebud will be. ◆

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Resources:

Kid Pix Studio Deluxe
Macintosh/Windows CD-ROM
Brøderbund Software, Inc.
Estimated price (no suggested retail): $29.99
May be ordered directly from Brøderbund at 1-800-521-6263 or via the Web at *www.broderbund.com*

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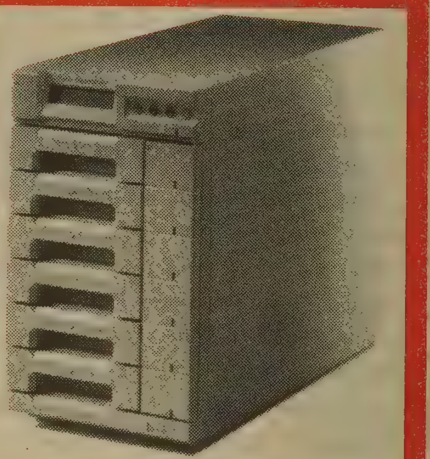

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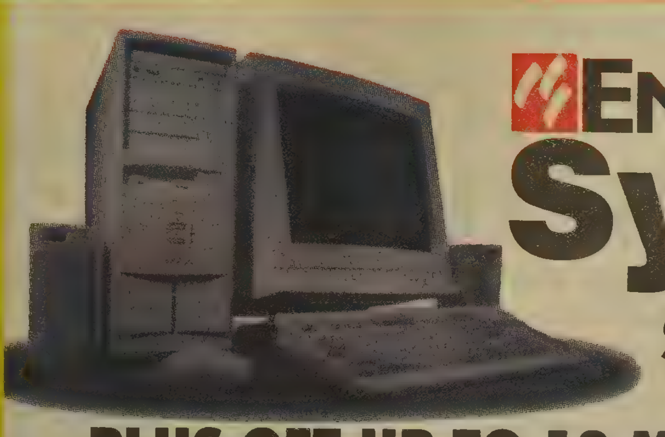

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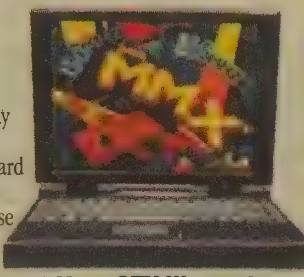

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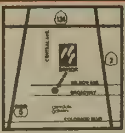

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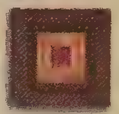

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Digital Animation

A Special-Effects Budget Boon | By Herb Mendelsohn

In *Titanic,* over 1000 actors never got a day's pay for diving to their icy deaths amongst the icebergs (mysteriously situated in the waters off Ensenada, Mexico). What appear to be bouncing and drowning people are really the newest rage in cost-effective casting—"Anitrons," sometimes called "Avatars." These computer generated digital extras populate crowd scenes in more and more blockbusters enabling directors and screenwriters to hatch plot lines which put hordes in harm's way without paying danger penalties to the Screen Actors' Guild.

PHOTO: MERIE W. WALLACE © 1997 PARAMOUNT PICTURES AND TWENTIETH CENTURY FOX. ALL RIGHTS RESERVED.

Digital extras jump to their icy death in Paramount Pictures/20th Century Fox's *Titanic.*

Computer generated animation saves Hollywood time, money—and now, lives. It performs redundant tasks, freeing animators to be more creative. Computers now can make films look much more expensive. To produce an epic like *Ben Hur* today without the aid of computer generated Romans might well be more expensive than the two hundred million dollars *Titanic* reportedly cost.

At the recent World Animation Celebration in Pasadena, Erik Armstrong, who created the digital snake that ate and regurgitated John Voight in *Anaconda,* said "Computer graphics will evolve and bring costs down faster than any other element in filmmaking." The feeling exists in the animation world that a filmmaker with a great story and a large enough hard drive will soon be able to produce a feature film at home.

The Advantages Of Animation

Unlike most live action films, each frame of animation is composed of a series of layers. Many of those layers have recurring constants, which make animation truly adaptable to computer applications. Characters will talk standing in front of a background for a few seconds, we all remember the talking Fred and Wilma heads of our *Flintstones* youth. The background can now be copied and pasted from frame to frame; in the old days, artists had to re-draw the same background over and over.

Film gives us images at 24 frames per second. There are usually four constants in each animated film: the background, the foreground, the atmosphere, and the focal point. Thus there are as many as half-a-million chances for recurring elements in an animated feature. Computer programs are getting better and better at helping to organize and optimize the impact of those half-million elements.

Only in animation does the director have so much control of where the audience's eye will travel. Animated film tries to duplicate life to a higher degree of realism than in TV. In film, audiences won't buy Fred and Wilma Flintstone talking in profile with only their lower jaws wagging.

Of course, that may change when *South Park,* Comedy Central's smash success, makes its silver screen debut. The low-tech, or even anti-tech, look of *South Park* has been completely duplicated on computer. A show which looks like some high school dropout's paper cuttings has turned out to be, thanks to some sophisticated computer graphics, one of the most profitable on television. It is a case of anti-tech being dependent on high-tech.

Expert Perspective

I was fortunate to be able to interview one of the prime creative forces in computer generated animation, Ms. Sari Gennis.

When we talked, she had just started on Twentieth Century Fox's second animated feature, *Planet Ice,* as visual effects supervisor. "After *Anastasia,* which was done as a traditionally animated film, Fox decided to jump into the world of computer animation with a sci-fi epic," said Gennis. "The creation of alien worlds for the sci-fi settings of *Planet Ice* is a perfect use of CGI (computer graphic imagery), although throughout the process there will still be a great deal of hand generated art.

"It is an incredibly exciting project for me personally because it's going to be a melding of the worlds of traditional animation, visual effects, and computer graphics. Up to now, I always felt like I was bouncing around between those areas. Computer animation is a relatively new field, and everyone has a different opinion of the best skills one needs coming into it.

"I've always felt that my traditional animation and art background, with all the caricature and science of motion skills, gives me something that few other visual effects artists have—and here is the perfect opportunity to test that. *Planet Ice* will use everything I've learned in my career up until now *and* challenge me to grow and learn new technologies and software."

Tad Gielow, Vice President of CGI (Computer Graphic Imaging) Development at Warner Bros. Feature Animation, echoes her views. He told me that Warner's experience was that they could teach a visual artist computer animating programs in about six months, but trying to teach a computer programmer to draw took a minimum of six years!

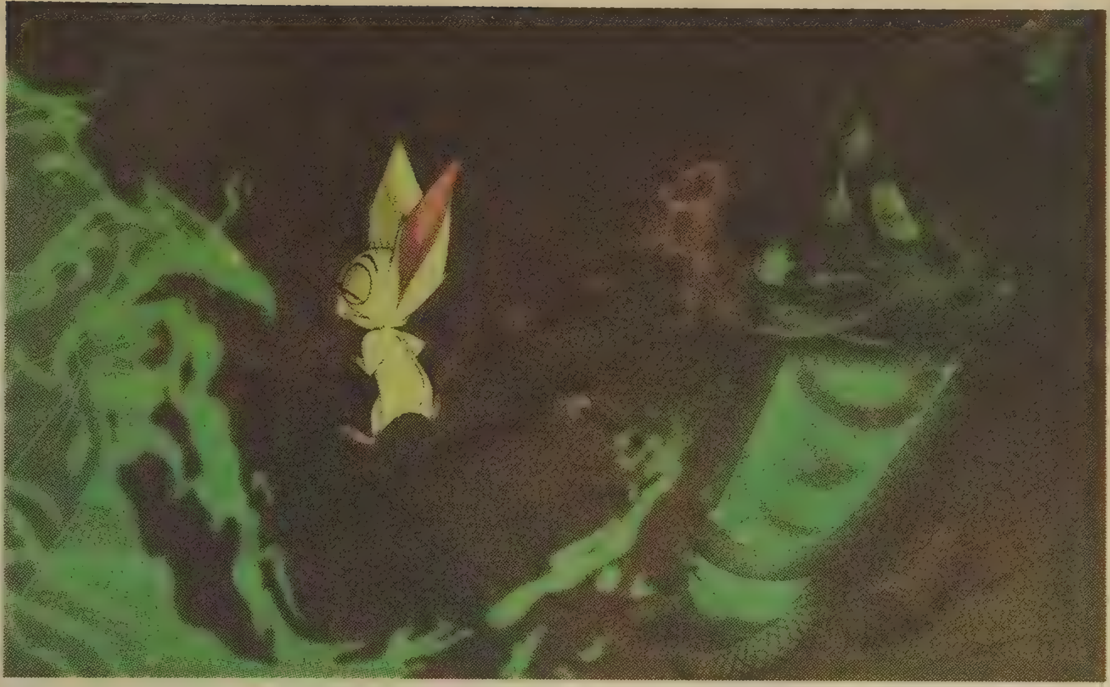
Ms. Gennis has seen the use of computers grow through her twenty years in animation. She told me that computers are good for many things, "but it is important to choose wisely. On *James And The Giant Peach*, we had hundreds of flying seagulls. CGI was very good for that; it saved lots of time. But the water they were flying over was very difficult, and we ended up drawing the interactive splashes by hand.

"Organic stuff is still very difficult for the computer," concluded Ms. Gennis, "and of course human animation is still the Holy Grail."

When I asked Ms. Gennis if computers saved money, she answered, "Everyone would like you to think so, but it really depends on what you're trying to do. For example, early on, Disney put Pocahontas' canoe on computer so that we could move it around and put characters inside easily. That saved time and repetitious drawing. Now because computers can do more, people design more things in."

She recalled that when she was first introduced to designing on the Mac she was amazed, and still thinks that Photoshop and Painter are magic. Yet she is still sometimes frustrated by the long time it takes to animate something on the computer, compared to just sitting down and drawing it. "I'm never going to let go of my pencil!" she said emphatically.

Ms. Gennis' main complaint about CGI is one I've heard echoed in many other quarters of the animation industry: "The problem is working with the software to make it intuitive. It is getting better, but it took a long time. When you are a slave to the software, you can't flow. There are all kinds of cheats you do when you draw that you can't do in the computer, as it takes everything so literally. But it's about trying to do things which haven't been done before—that's where computers excite my creativity!"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Top: Rasputin's reliquary (shown here with Rasputin's sidekick, Bartok the bat) was drawn traditionally for position, then modeled on CGI for stunning 3D effects in Twentieth Century Fox's *Anastasia*. Bottom: computer generated 3D effects bring the inanimate objects of King Arthur's forbidden forest to life in Warner Bros. *Quest For Camelot*.

Animation At Warner Bros.

Wendy Aylsworth, the Vice President of Technology for Warner Bros. Feature Animation, kindly guided me through more than two-hundred workstations at their new animation center in Glendale. Most artists' stations were equipped with both a $35,000 Silicon Graphics system and a $15,000–$20,000 PC system, plus two hi-resolution monitors. Warner Bros. Feature Animation also has about 150 Macs that they use for production tracking, and another 150 Macs for office management. When I was there all forces were mobilized to put the finishing touches on their past two year's work, *Quest For Camelot*. This is Warner Bros.' first fully animated feature in 75 years of film making.

Quest For Camelot boasts an all-star cast of Sir John Gielgud as Merlin, Jane Seymour as Julienna, Pierce Brosnan as King Arthur, Eric Idle and Don Rickles as the two-headed Dinosaur, and the super-star of animated voices, Frank Welker, as the seeing-eye Falcon.

"CGI is used extensively in the forbidden forest scene of *Quest*," said Aylsworth. "Rocks come to life; the fog and a carriage are all computer generated."

There's also a productivity gain. "In traditional hand-painted animation, one cel takes about twenty minutes to paint; with computers and commercial software, we've reduced that time to under eight minutes."

We visited Nancy Finley, who is a "Digital Cel Painter." She has formal art training, but has migrated to computer animation, drawing on a pad with a digital stylus. She watches her work on two Sony monitors, rotating the model of what she is working on in her left monitor, while doing close-ups in her right. "I concentrate on the eyes," she explained. "They are the key to the character; we like to get them right."

Meanwhile, in another part of the building they're working on Warner Bros.' next animated feature, *Iron Giant*, which will be the first 2D animated film with a lead character done totally in 3D. Tad Gielow and his staff are in uncharted waters. "We've tripled our staff and have 39 computer animators working on the model for *Iron Giant*," he said.

We walked through a research library with an Internet terminal for collecting images and seeking historical inspiration. Next I saw the virtual training center where 16 stations are available so recent graduates and new Warner

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Bros. employees can continue their computer art training.

The center was also hooked up live via a bi-directional video feed to educational sites around the country. High school and college students in arts programs in East LA, San Jose, and Birmingham, AL, tune in for a session with the Warner professionals.

Other Developments

Disney has just announced its first kids-only site, D-Blast (*disneyblast.com*), an online service for kids featuring the latest inside scoop on Disney films, "D-Mail," and much more. The service is free to MSN subscribers but $5.95/month to others.

The animation industry as a whole is working fast and furious to entice young minds into its fold. At the second annual World Animation Festival held recently in Pasadena, 1,000 kids from all over the world gathered to produce an animated film in a marathon three days.

The theme of the film was cultural diversity. Teams of 12 students sat around tables in the great exposition hall of the Pasadena convention center and thought up a thirty-second vignette having to do with diversity. They then assigned themselves tasks in order to produce the 720 multi-layered cels it takes to convey a half-minute's idea. The 80-odd half-minute segments are then strung together, producing a 45-minute film that's premiered on the big screen at the conclusion of the Animated Film Festival.

The entertainment industry is spreading out away from Hollywood and buying computers to take with it. Fox studios in Phoenix, AZ, where *Anastasia* was created, purchased $100 million worth of computer technology. Disney did the same creating a studio in Orlando, FL, where *Mulan* was just finished, marking the first time a Disney animated film was not made in Burbank. Industrial Light and Magic has long been a computer innovator and benefits from its proximity to the Silicon Valley.

The latest frontier for computers in animation is stop-motion technology. Actors wear body suits cabled through motion sensors creating digital input recording all aspects of three-dimensional movement. This data can be rendered into several media.

The jury is still out as to whether stop-motion saves time or money— data management is very complicated, and it is impossible to make changes after the actors have gone home. Improvision's production of *Sinbad*, which is being done in stop-motion technology, has greatly reduced the time actors are needed. Michelle Beauchamps, the body behind Meg Ryan's voice in *Anastasia* and recently finished a stint in a body suit for *Sinbad*, tells me, "I spent two years working for the Disney animators in *Hercules*, we finished *Sinbad* in just two months!"

Who's Driving Who?

Is technology enabling art, or are artistic visionaries driving the need to create new hardware and software? The answer is yes.

Scripts are being produced that could never have been made without digital technologies, and Anitrons, Avatars, and digital extras have been invented to save actors from life-threatening stunts.

Sari Gennis sums it up well: "I believe a fine mix of computer tools and hand crafted painting leads us to an artistic film. Computers aid my creativity; they have opened my mind to possibilities I might not have invented without them." ◆

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Resources:

Warner Bros. Feature Animation
www.quest4camelot.com

Animation Magazine
www.Animag.com

Disney's Online Magazine for kids ($5.95/mo. Ages 3–12)
www.disneyblast.com

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Slots AGP/PCI/ISA	0/4/3	0/4/3	0/4/4	0/5/4	0/4/3	0/4/4	1/3/3
Bus Clock	66/75MHz	66/75MHz	66/75/83MHz	66/75/83MHz	66/75/83MHz	66/75/83MHz	66/75/83/100MHz
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3DIMM/384M	2DIMM/4SIMM/256M	3DIMM/384M	2DIMM/4SIMM/256M	8SIMM/512M	**#RAM/Max RAM**	3DIMM/384M	3DIMM/384M
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1/4/2	1/4/2	1/4/2	1/4/3	**Slots AGP/PCI/ISA**	1/4/3	1/4/3	1/4/2
66/75/83MHz	66MHz	66MHz	66MHz	**Bus Clock**	66/100MHz	66/100/112/125MHz	66/100MHz
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3PC100 DIMM/384M	3PC100 DIMM/384M	3PC100 DIMM/384M	4PC100 DIMM/512M	4PC100 DIMM/512M	4PC100 DIMM/1GB	4PC100 DIMM/512M	4PC100 DIMM/1GB
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1/4/3	1/4/3	1/4/2	1/4/3	1/4/3	1/4/2	1/4/3	1/4/2
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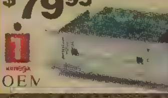

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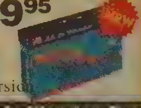

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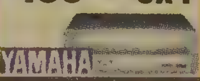

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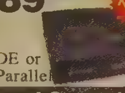

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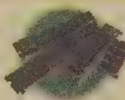

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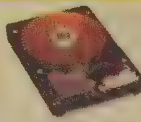

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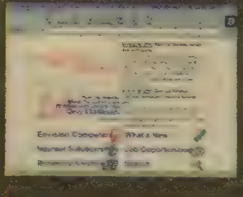

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From Jobs To Memorabilia

Web Sites For The Movie Fan | By Jill Barnes

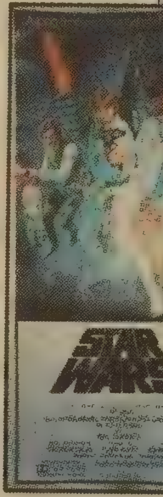
Do the movies and all their trappings have a special appeal? Do you lust for that special autographed picture? How about a vintage movie poster for your den or family room? Or are you a struggling actor looking for a job?

Movie buffs and fans have lots of places on the Internet to find collectibles—or to book tours to movie studios. A few clicks and you're just a phone call or email away from getting just about all the information you'll need.

Posters

Movie posters, like the ones displayed at your local movie house, are hot items, especially the older and classic ones.

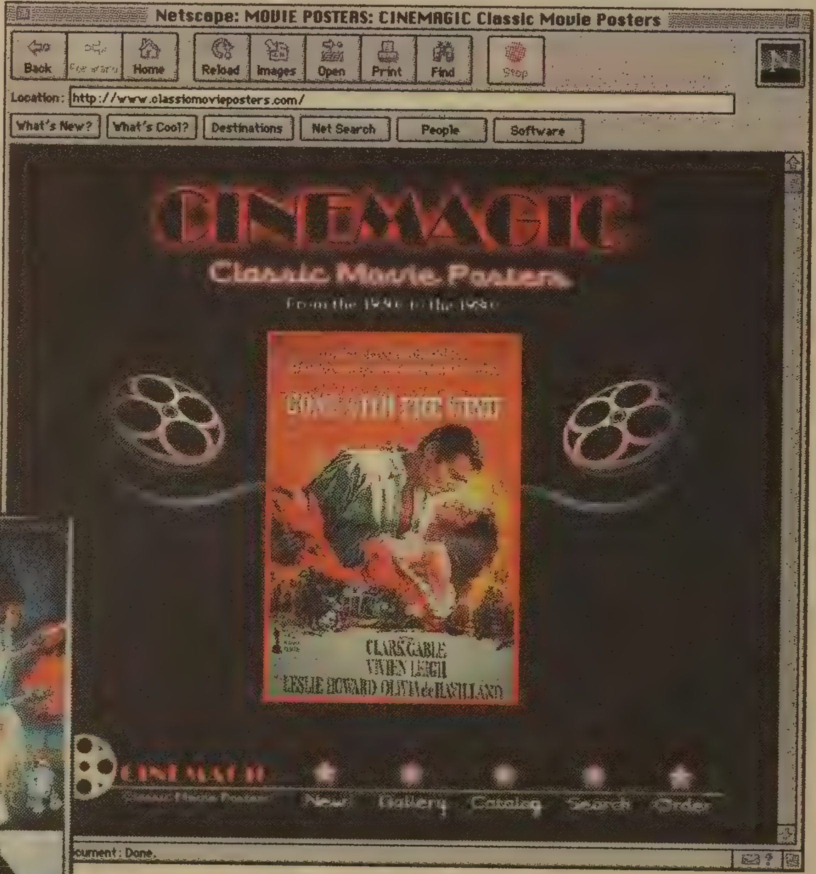
At **Cinemagic** (*www.classicmovieposters.com*), a company located in San Diego, poster fans will find all kinds of movie poster-art. Samples of the posters are available for viewing on screen, but if you plan to buy, have a hefty checkbook ready. A poster from a Roy Roger movie, *Along the Navajo Trail*, circa 1946, can be yours for $400. The same price also gets you a colorful shot of Laurel & Hardy shaving from their movie *Our Relations* (1936). Or how about *The Ape*, starring Boris Korloff (1940) for just $600. If you're into Sci-Fi, a poster from the 1958 classic *The Astounding She Monster* is priced at $950. If you're just starting out, the company does offer a few for less than $100.



If you're a "Bond, James Bond" fan go to the **Cinemonde** site (*www.commanders.com/~bond/cinemond/cmhome.htm*). Here, the serious Bond collector, mostly of the Sean Connery era, can find classic posters from 1962-1971. Did you know there were different movie house posters for both the United States and UK? They have them at this site. Again, these posters don't come cheap. One rare variety from the movie *Goldfinger* is available for about $2,000.

The Movie Poster Page (*www.musicman.com/mp/posters.html*) says it's the largest and oldest Web site on the Internet dedicated to movie posters. At this site, you can find samples of illustrated posters for sale from a large private collection, plus a non-illustrated catalog with over 3000 entries. And if you don't see what you want, just ask. They say they're happy to search for your request.

Memorabilia Mine (*www.memomine.com*) is hailed as "One stop shopping for movie memorabilia." The San Jose company has posters, stills, autographs, sound tracks, sheet music, and press books. Poster and autograph hounds can find stuff from a diverse group of individuals—Tom Hanks, Richard Pryor, and Herman Munster. They also offer things like the *Hit Parade* with Judy Garland on the cover and classic Disney Comics featuring Davy Crockett and The Shaggy Dog.



Autographs

Those interested more in autographs can call up **J. D. Bardwell's Celebrity Autographs Page** (*www.nh.ultranet.com/~bardwell*) . Their prices start as low as $1 and they guarantee all autographs are authentic—forever. Whatever that means. Bardwell says they go right to the source for autographs. In addition to movie stars, the company also has signatures from television stars, musicians, and rock stars.

Autograph World (*www.autographworld.com*) says it's the Internet's best online autograph catalog. They specialize in the sale of celebrity autographs from vintage television and film through the present. All autographs come with a lifetime, money back guarantee backed with a certificate of authenticity.

Autographs Central (*www.autographcentral. com*) has lots of photos with autographs for sale. They seem to favor the outer space theme—much of their stuff is from the different *Star Trek* and *Star Wars* series. They plan to include materials from *Babylon 5* and *Battlestar Galactica* in the near future.

Speaking of space, you'll find lots of fan club sites for *Star Trek* and *Star Wars*. There are at least a dozen sites for *Star Trek* enthusiasts (including ones from Germany and New Zealand) and maybe a half dozen for *Star Wars* (featuring an Italian language site). Just click the search area with your selection.

Studios

If the studio is your scene, **Screenscribe** (*www.geocities.com/hollywood/4486*) has related links to the movie and television studios for one stop shopping. One link was to the ***Titanic*** (*www.titanicmovie.com*) . So, get the latest scoop on this year's blockbuster.

If you wish to find info on the individual studios, most have their own site. At **Paramount** (*www.paramount.com*), you can get information on its big screen and TV movies, along with home videos. It's an interesting site for other tidbits of info, such as booking regular tours for the Hollywood studio.

Warner Bros. (*www.warnerbros.com*) offers info on its movies, TV shows, videos, and amusement parks. There's also a virtual lot, with a map to find out about individual shows such as *ER* and *Friends*, or material on dramas and comedies. You can also call up bios and pictures of your favorite Warner Bros. stars.

At the **20th Century Fox** site (*www.fox.com*), you'll find some special screenings of movies along with a sort of virtual tour of how some of the movie sets are made. It also includes downloadable pictures and interactive sites.

Universal Studios (*www.universalstudios.com*) has director clips and other downloadable clips from its new movies like: *Mercury Rising*, *Black Dog* and *BASEketball*.

MGM-United Artists(*www.mgmua.com*) has a studio store, movie and TV information, contests and a listing of upcoming events that your local area might be hosting.

But Wait, There's More

Cinemaholics (*www.inquo.net/~cinema*) is for the ultimate fan. It features TV and motion picture collectibles, autographs, props and memorabilia. They let you know, "We're not the cheapest place on the block, but if quality and uniqueness is what you want, this is the place." All autographs are guaranteed authentic, although I'm not sure how they can do that considering some are from the 1920s. Among the autograph pictures offered are of Batman and Robin from the TV series (Adam West/Burt Ward) for $125, or you can go with the newer pairs, Val Kilmer and Chris O'Donnell of *Batman Forever* for $175. There's also a page on the ins-and-outs of autograph collecting and how to start. Plus, another Star Trek Page, which promises you'll find items no one else has.

Cinemaholics gives information on conventions and seminars and offers a catalog of available merchandise that can be unzipped later for viewing.

eDRIVE (*www.edrive.com/index3.html*) gives you the latest scoop on upcoming movies and TV shows. Plus, there are chat sessions with celebrities from both the big and small screen. You also can download "wallpaper" of such stars as the Spice Girls, Leonardo DiCaprio, Demi Moore, the Odd Couple—and the screen's newest and "biggest" star, Godzilla.

If you're looking for a job in the movies, try the **Hollywood Web** (*www.hollywoodweb.com*). It's an online job bulletin board for would-be actors, writers, extras, and techs. Or if you think you could be a stunt person in the movies or on TV, click to **Stunt Players** (*www.stuntplayers.com*). It's touted as the "only searchable Database of World Class Stunt performers in Hollywood and around the World." Prospective stunt people can add their resume to the mix. ◆

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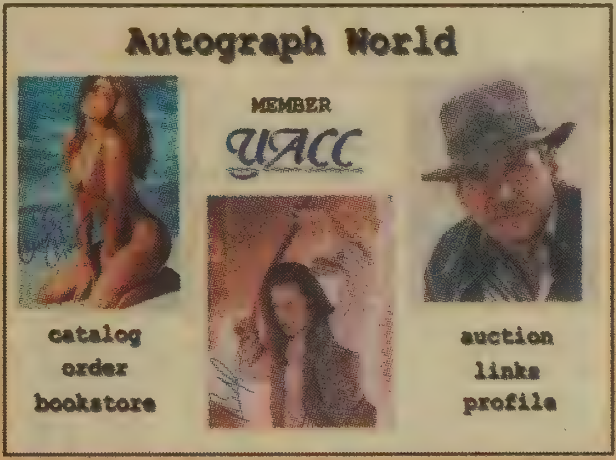
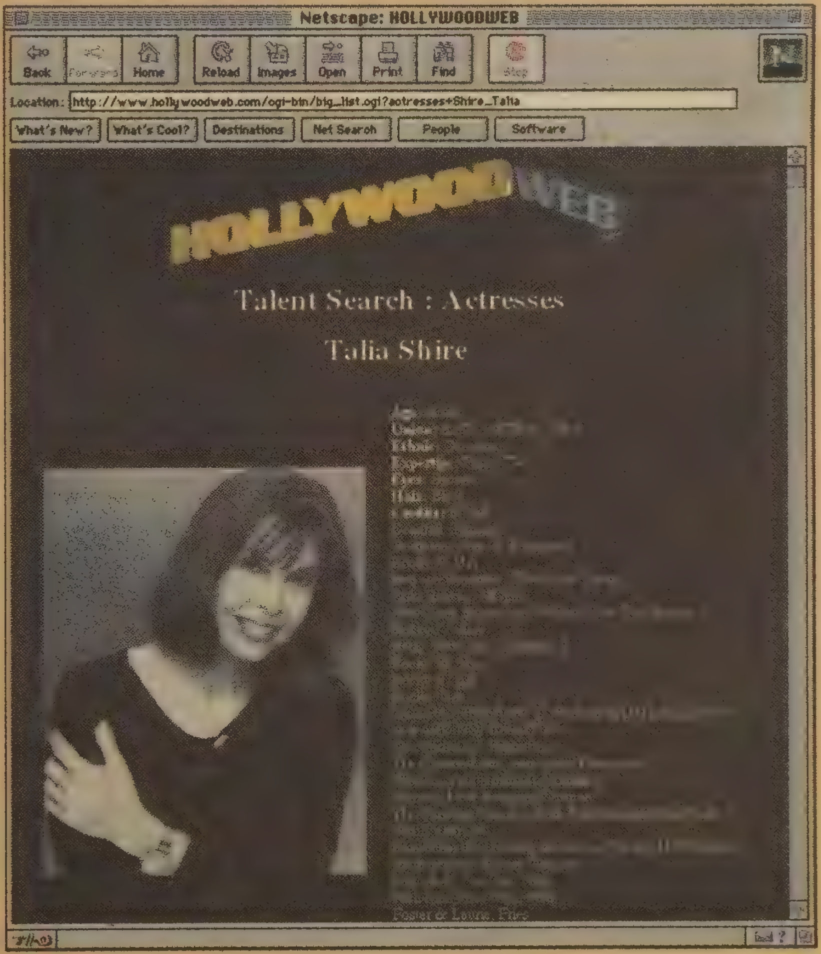
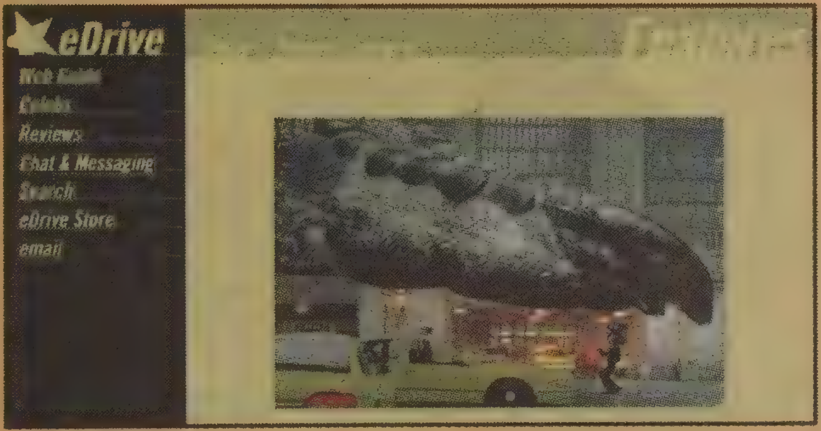
Opposite page: Fans can buy classic movie posters at Cinemagic. This page, clockwise from right: Autograph World specializes in the sale of celebrity autographs; the *Titanic* site includes storyboards, interviews, and stills from the blockbuster, like this one of Kate Winslet; actors can post their headshot and resume on the Hollywood Web; 20th Century Fox's site contains special screenings and downloadable pictures; at eDrive you can get the latest scoop on upcoming movies and TV shows.







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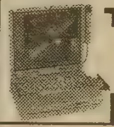

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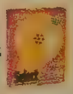

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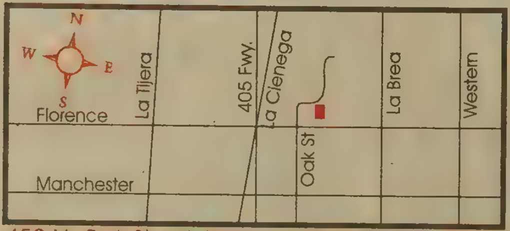

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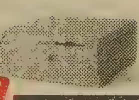

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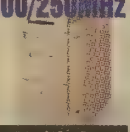

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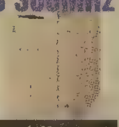

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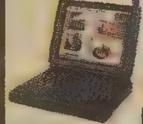

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Wall Street Meets "Entertainment Tonight"

Today, Stocks. Tomorrow, Movies? | By David Kline

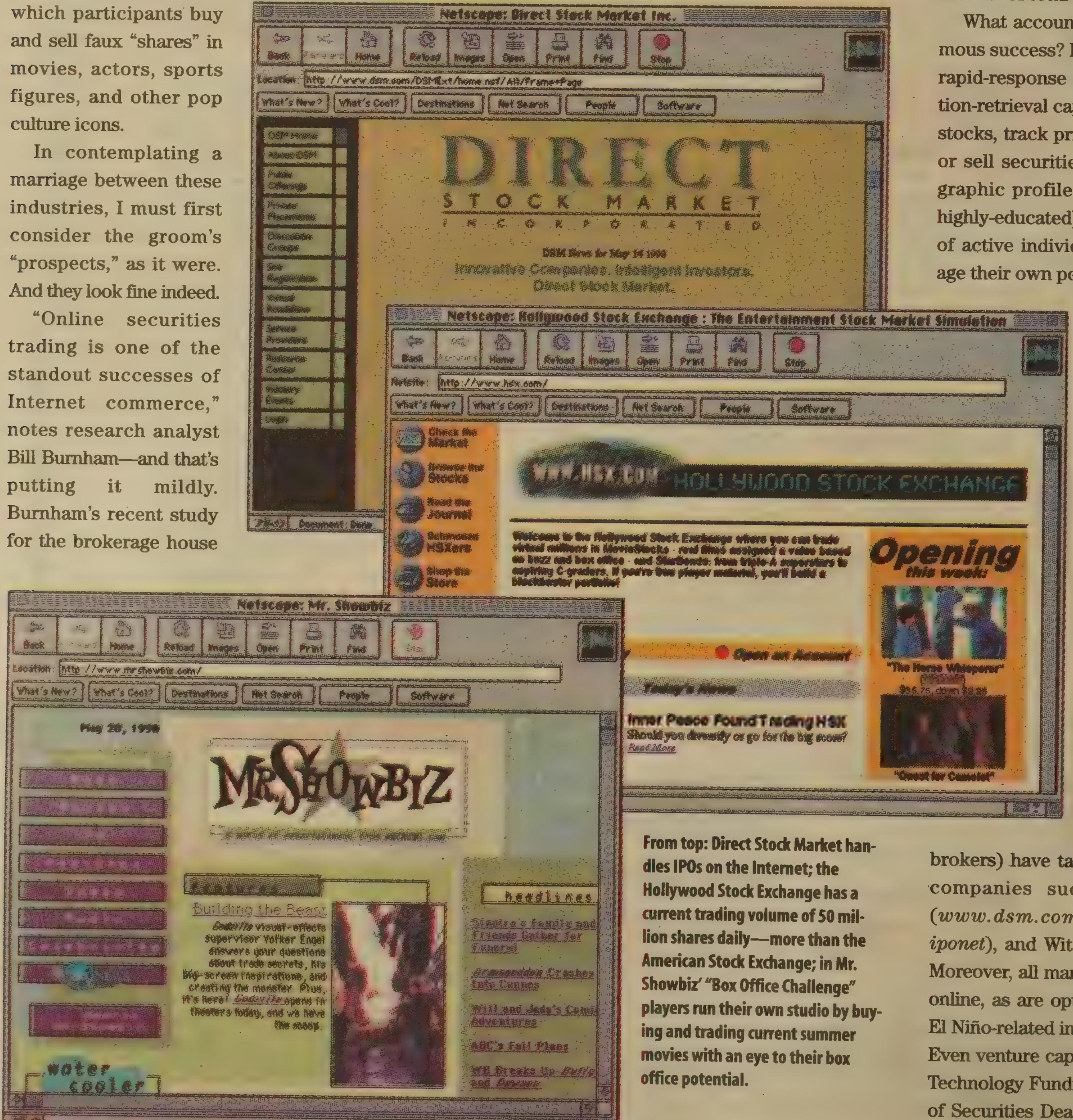
Matchmaking is not usually my forté, but I can't help thinking that two of the Internet's more attractive players would make a lovely (and highly profitable) couple.

The prospective groom? The online securities trading industry.

The blushing bride? Entertainment fantasy-game "stock markets," in which participants buy and sell faux "shares" in movies, actors, sports figures, and other pop culture icons.

In contemplating a marriage between these industries, I must first consider the groom's "prospects," as it were. And they look fine indeed.

"Online securities trading is one of the standout successes of Internet commerce," notes research analyst Bill Burnham—and that's putting it mildly. Burnham's recent study for the brokerage house Piper Jaffray predicted that commissions derived from Internet securities trading will increase fourfold—to $2.2 billion by 2001, from $628 million in 1997. That figure will represent 60% of all discount commissions and 10% of all retail stock brokerage commissions.



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Building the Beast
Godzilla visual-effects supervisor Volker Engel answers your questions about trade secrets, his big-screen inspirations, and creating the monster. Plus, it's here! *Godzilla* opens in theaters today, and we have the scoop.

Sinatra's Family and Friends Gather for Funeral

Armageddon Crashes Into Cannes

Will and Jada's Comic Adventures

ABC's Fall Plans

WB Breaks Up *Buffy* and *Dawson*

From top: Direct Stock Market handles IPOs on the Internet; the Hollywood Stock Exchange has a current trading volume of 50 million shares daily—more than the American Stock Exchange; in Mr. Showbiz' "Box Office Challenge" players run their own studio by buying and trading current summer movies with an eye to their box office potential.

Other studies confirm Piper Jaffray's estimates. Forrester Research predicts that the number of people holding online trading accounts will jump from 3 million today to more than 14 million within four years. These traders will wield $688 billion in assets, notes Forrester, and will be responsible for as much as 20% of all trading volume on Wall Street, up from today's already enviable 4% of total stock market activity.

What accounts for online stock trading's enormous success? First, there's the fact that the Net's rapid-response searching, filtering, and information-retrieval capabilities make it easy to research stocks, track prices, access timely news, and buy or sell securities efficiently. Second, the demographic profile of Internet users (affluent and highly-educated) tracks perfectly with the profile of active individual investors, who largely manage their own portfolios.

That said, however, my duties as a virtual matchmaker require me to examine the eager groom's, er, "fertility." And I have to say that not only has the online stock business been hugely successful with regard to trading existing securities, it has also proved extraordinarily prolific at siring new kinds of financial products and services.

Since the Securities and Exchange Commission granted approval in 1996 for online IPOs, for example, more than 50 direct public offerings (IPOs sold directly to the public via the Internet without the mediation of underwriters and brokers) have taken place under the auspices of companies such as Direct Stock Market (*www.dsm.com*), IPOnet (*www.zanax.com/iponet*), and Wit Capital (*www.witcapital.com*). Moreover, all manner of bonds are now being sold online, as are options and futures, including new, El Niño-related insurance industry "storm futures." Even venture capital funds have gone online since Technology Funding won the National Association of Securities Dealers' approval to sell "retail size" shares as small as $1,000 in its VC fund.

continued on page 220

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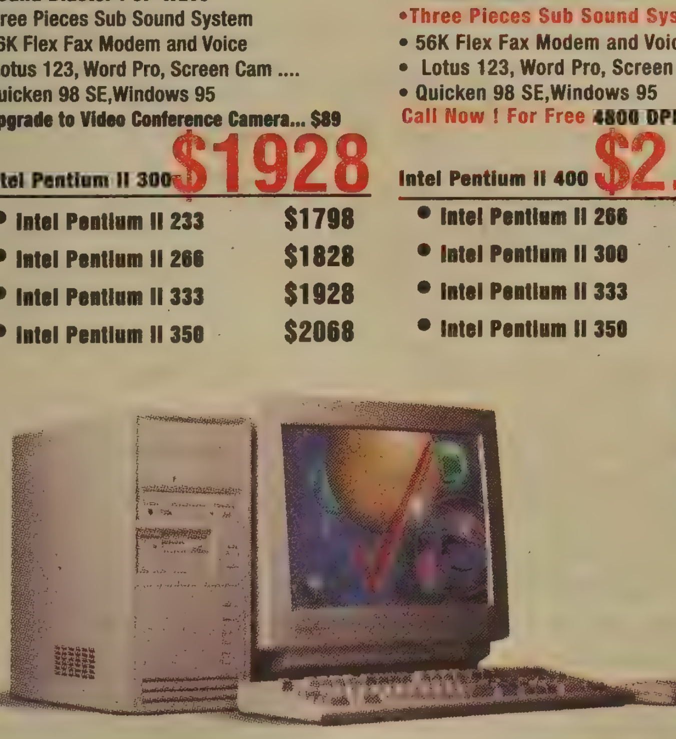

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Calibrate Your Bogosity Detectors—It's The Web!

Plus: The Future Of Games

By Peter Linde and Sam Penrose

This month, Peter talks about why a healthy dose of skepticism is important when surfing the Web, and Sam talks about possible futures for computer games.

Everything You Read On The Web Is A Lie

By Peter Linde

What would you say if I told you that a computer is lying to you?

If you use search engines on the Web, chances are it happens to you every time you perform a search. The search engines don't mean to lie. They are just programmed to.

And what would you think about the article you just read in that online magazine if you found out that it was written by the company about which it purports to report?

Can't happen? Actually it happens all the time.

Unlike traditional practice in media such as newspapers, magazines, radio, and TV, journalistic ethics simply don't exist on the Web. You may be learning about it here first, but the truth is out there.

The credibility of what you read on the Web is rendered suspect in several ways. I'll discuss a few here, but this is by no means a complete list of the ways in which what you read on the Internet is perverted to commercial and other ends.

Buddy—Wanna Buy A Keyword?

When you go to a search engine, or use the search function of an online magazine, it's likely that you hold the belief that the results of your search will be accurate.

Here is how a search engine is supposed to work: A Web Page author registers their site with a search engine. That search engine then goes and "reads" the site. It creates an index of the all the words on that site (they generally ignore words like conjunctions, pronouns, etc.). When you use the search engine, rather than searching all the sites on all the computers on the Web, you search just the index of sites that the search engine has created for itself. This is obviously much faster and doesn't bog down the Internet quite as much.

If you are like most of us, you believe that your search results are the yield of the search engine matching the keywords you've entered against its own list of keywords from its index. Sadly, you are likely to be incorrect in this belief. I won't name any names here, but quite a few search engines sell exclusive use of keywords to advertisers. This means that if you search on a word that an advertiser has purchased, regardless of whether or not their site has anything to do with your keyword, their site will pop right up at the top of your result list.

An example might be a travel agency that buys words like, "romantic," "honeymoon," "adventure," and "escape." Their site may or may not contain these words. It doesn't matter. If they buy the words, their site will come up first in your search results.

It's also possible for Web page authors to bias search results using what's called a "meta tag" in their HTML documents. This tag allows them to place keywords that you don't see unless you choose to view the source of a document. But these keywords are definitely read by the search engines and used for ranking each document in any search results. Some documents can have hundreds of words in their meta tags.

I've Got A Bridge I'll Sell You

More serious is a little something marketers like to call "advertorial."

As the name implies, it is the combination of advertising and editorial. In reality it is the selling of editorial copy in online magazines.

Almost all online magazines sell advertising space. This is how they support themselves. After all, publishing information on the Web is not charity work. It takes time, talent, energy, money and, ideally, something to say.

Many online magazines (and certainly not all!) sell not just ad space, but the actual article space as well. Companies who want some PR can pay the magazine to write a favorable article about them. In some cases, they can even write the articles themselves. Usually, these articles do not disclose this arrangement.

As consumers of the written word in magazines and newspapers, we have come to count on the separation of editorial and advertising as being almost as sacred a division as the one between church and state provided for in the US Constitution. Print magazines that review products generally go to great lengths to make sure that the credibility of their reviews is not tainted by who gives them money in the form of advertising dollars. This is not always the case with Web publishing.

So how can you tell if the article you just read is, in fact, a paid advertisement? You can't. The most you can do is write to the publication and ask them if they have a policy about the separation of content and advertising.

> You probably believe that your search results are the yield of the search engine matching the keywords you've entered against its own list of keywords from its index. Sadly, you are likely to be incorrect in this belief. Quite a few search engines sell exclusive use of keywords to advertisers.

A Sucker Logs On Every Second

The last reason for not trusting what you read on the Web is the oldest of the three: People purposely publish Web pages that are meant to deceive you.

For some reason, people who won't believe everything they read in a newspaper apparently find it irresistible to believe every single word that is fed to them from the Internet. And don't

continued on page 142

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Model	Processor	RAM	HD	Display	CD	MDM	Price
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Model	Processor	RAM	HD	Display	CD	MDM	Price
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Model	Processor	RAM	HD	Display	CD	MDM	Price
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LifeBook 585Tx	P/233 mmx	32	4GB	12.1" TFT	20 X	33.6	$3299.00
LifeBook 656Tx	P/150 mmx	16	2GB	12.1" TFT	16 X	33.6	$2599.00
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LifeBook 755Tx	P/150 mmx	32	2GB	12.1" TFT	20 X	56K	$1899.00
LifeBook 765Tx	P/166 mmx	32	3.2GB	12.1" TFT	20 X	56K	$1999.00
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VisionBook Pro 7360	P/166 mmx	32	2.1GB	12.1" TFT	10 X	56K	$2099.00
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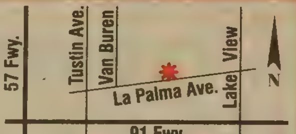

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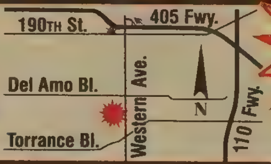

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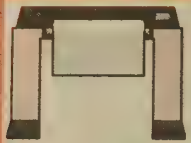

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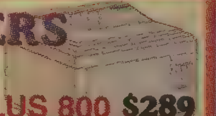

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worry, if you fell for a virus hoax, or learned from the Web that the earth was flat after all, you are not alone. More than one traditional news agency has been fooled by "research" they have done on the Web. Without bothering to check beyond a Web search, news agencies have been duped into broadcasting items that were false.

Why do people publish things on their Web pages that they know to be false? A lot of people do it for fun, just to see who they can catch. Others do it with a specific target in mind (like a news agency). Either way, because anyone can publish in this new medium, you need to be skeptical of everything you read.

What can we do? As far as individual Web publishers, you can't do much. And in truth, I wouldn't want you to. The existence of a medium with so low a barrier to entry, that allows just about anyone in the world to get a global audience for their thoughts, is an exciting thing. Freedom of speech is a critical component to the medium's power. Just teach your children (and yourself, while you're at it) to think critically. That's about the best protection you can have. Be skeptical.

The fact that a computer is sending you information does not make that information accurate. Remember the HAL 9000?

However, online magazines should be held to a higher standard. They should conform to the same journalistic ethics that print and broadcast media are held to for separation of content and advertisement. If you are a regular reader of an online journal, write to the editor and ask for their policies regarding advertorial and the sale of key words in their search engines. Ultimately, if they want to be paid for their articles, that's fine, but they should post that arrangement along with the article.

If you have questions or comments about this topic, please send me some email (along with your social security number, two forms of picture ID, and three professional references) to *MicroTimes_Column@bmug.org* .

At Play In The Metaverse

By Sam Penrose

Two months ago in this space (*www.microtimes.com/178/bmug.html#sam*) we looked at some of today's computer games and how they created their little worlds. I argued that they seemed to fall into one of two categories: "physics" games such as *Myth* and *Quake*, and the "story" games *Myst* and *Riven*.

Each kind of game offers its own compelling experience, but both seem to have limited futures. The makers of physics games are stuck on simulated violence. The story games advance a hokey (if effective) story line by endless mouse-clicks. Both work by giving players the opportunity to move around in fantasy worlds borrowed from J.R.R. Tolkien's Middle Earth and old science fiction—a rather limited set of clichés.

Those clichés may be swept aside by new ideas, but computer games are also limited by technology. *Myth* and *Riven* barely run on four-year-old computers like my Power Mac 7100/66, which represents something close to the median of the installed base. Even on the newest computers, today's games push hard against the limits of the current PC form: *Riven* forces players to swap CD-ROMs in and out, while *Myth*'s keyboard-and-mouse interface turns the harder levels into a test of one's typing skills. One can easily see *Riven*'s descendants exceeding the capacity of upcoming DVD-ROM standards.

Myth's predecessor, the *Marathon* series, mapped 29 of the 87 different keys on my extended keyboard, a manageable 15 per hand. *Myth* maps 49 of 87 while demanding simultaneous mouse use, effectively forcing me to control all 49 with just one hand. It's hard to see how even *Myth*'s ingenious inventors at Bungie Software will extend that trend for their next game.

An optimist would project the future from what these games do well. *Riven* realizes a world richly sensuous in sight and sound. *Myth* throws you into exhilarating contests with other people over the Internet. The former effort is limited by storage space and processing power, the latter by bandwidth. When those limits have been exploded by the passing of a few years, what will software engineers come up with?

No one knows, but in 1992 Neal Stephenson made some interesting guesses in *Snow Crash*, a 470-page exercise in technological futurism thinly disguised as a novel. In *Snow Crash*, skateboarders ride on freeways instead of sidewalks. Dogs run on nuclear isotopes. And the text-based Internet becomes a three-dimensional "Metaverse."

The Metaverse, which Stephenson invented around the same time that Tim Berners-Lee and cohorts invented the World Wide Web, is a set of places defined and linked by common software protocols, just like the Internet and its subset the Web. It is a "realistic" world of sight and sound...or at least as realistic as a character's hardware, software, and bandwidth allow.

The analogy is roughly DOS:Mac/Windows: *Myth/Riven*:TCP/IP:WWW:Metaverse, except that the interface advantage today's games enjoy over today's GUIs comes at the expense of usefulness, while the fictional Metaverse is vastly more useful than today's Web. Players "move" in *Myst* and *Riven* via keyboard and mouse; the Metaverse fully immerses Stephenson's characters in a computer-generated universe of sight and sound via holographic projection of their avatars.

Imagine being Bugs Bunny in a cartoon. Now, imagine that the cartoon has been spliced together with footage from *Star Wars*, *The Seven Samurai*, *Koyaanisqatsi*, and every other movie you've ever seen, all the worlds connected, all the characters interacting, and many of them "directing," "costuming," or "editing" the movie as it plays by rewriting the software. That's the Metaverse.

There people play games (fighting with swords *a la Myth* and racing motorcycles at thousand of "miles" per hour), but also network, people-watch, and even work. Individual computers are "rooms" in the Metaverse just as Windows 98 treats local hard drives as Web sites.

Riven's lush sense of place is available to anyone with the desire to customize their own machine. *Snow Crash* implies that today's division between computer games and productive applications is an artifact of interface limitations. At one point *Snow Crash*'s protagonist (named "Protagonist" in one of Stephenson's cute/irritating winks at the reader) moves from a business meeting to a swordfight with no more transition than a shift in the "direction" his avatar happens to be looking.

This is, I think, a wonderful insight. Today's computer games provide space for play by trading flexibility for relative intensity of experience. If you want to shoot space aliens, you are stuck looking at a few images and diddling a few keys until you get bored and do something else. In the real world, the lines between play and work are not so clear. To the dismay of managers everywhere, both are deeply rooted in human experience. Stephenson suggests that the maturation of computers as tools is inseparable from their maturation as toys—one might look at today's automotive industries to see what such a blurring of the lines looks like.

There are many more sharp and entertaining conceits in *Snow Crash* than I have room to list here. If you are interested in the future of computing, I recommend this seven year-old book. Like any attempt to project the future, Stephenson's ideas will certainly be proven wrong in many respects, but that shouldn't stop him or us from playing with these fantasies.

Good futurism is useful fun.

Feedback on this or previous columns welcome at *MicroTimes_Column@bmug.org* . ◆

Resources:

Snow Crash
By Neal Stephenson
Bantam Spectra 1993.

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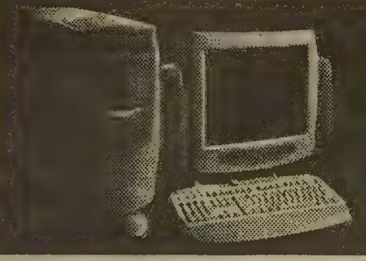

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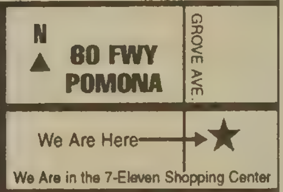

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Surf The Net, Go To Jail

PHOTO: DAMIEN LEWIS

Owning A Modem Or Fax Machine In Burma Can Kill You

By Dan Orzech

On May 23, 1996, James Nichols, a 65 year-old businessman, was sentenced to three years in prison by the military regime ruling the South-East Asian country of Burma.

His crime? Owning a fax machine without permission.

In 1989, during the Tienanmen Square uprising, news of what was going on in China slipped out of that country via faxes, and spread like wildfire on the Internet.

The generals running Burma, which is sandwiched between China, India, and Thailand, are determined not to make that mistake. A decree issued in 1996, mandates prison sentences of up to fifteen years for owning a modem or a fax machine in that country without government permission.

Nichols died on June 22, 1996, under mysterious circumstances, after serving only a month of his sentence in Burma's infamous Insein prison. He was honorary consul in Burma for Denmark, Norway, and Finland, and his death caused a furor in Europe. The European Union has repeatedly called for an investigation of the circumstances of his death, a demand that the generals in Burma have ignored. The US, Canadian, and Australian governments have also demanded an investigation, and Nichols' family, who live in Australia, has announced its intention to sue the generals in Burma over his death.

For four nights in a row before his death, says a just-released political prisoner who was in prison at the same time, a hood was put over Nichols' head, and he was taken away and interrogated until daybreak. While political prisoners in Insein are routinely tortured, Nichols was singled out for special attention because of his friendship with Burma's democratically elected leader, Aung San Suu Kyi. Mrs. Suu Kyi, winner of the 1991 Nobel Peace Prize, has been held under house arrest for most of the last nine years.

Nichols real crime was not owning the fax machine, but using it, reportedly, to relay messages outside Burma for Aung San Suu Kyi. While Nichols' case has attracted attention because of his connections with the West, his treatment at the hands of Burma's military is far from unusual. For those living in the West, where using a fax machine, a telephone or a copier without fear of Big Brother looking over your shoulder is taken for granted, it provides a chilling example of how control over information technology can be used in the service of evil.

Welcome To The World Of 1984

There's a joke making the rounds in Burma, about George Orwell's book *Burmese Days*. "If you liked Orwell's first book about Burma," say the Burmese, "you'll love the sequel: *1984*."

In Burma, the world of *1984* is no joke. Access to Burma's two ISPs is tightly controlled. Importing computer software without permission is punishable by 5 to 10 years in prison. So is importing information banned by the government. The military maintains an iron grip on newspaper presses, video tapes, and copy machines... not to mention television, radio, and book publishing.

In April, the Burmese military kicked FedEx, UPS, TNT and other air express companies out of Burma. All overseas express packages are now routed through a joint venture between the government Posts and Telecommunications agency and DHL Worldwide Express, allowing the military to closely monitor any packages which may contain political information.

The military even controls who gets a phone line. "You can't get a phone line if you don't have connections," says Coban Tun, a Burmese computer programmer who lives in San Francisco. "Ordinary people make perhaps 10 or 20 dollars a month, but they charge 1,000 dollars for a phone line. You can't pay in Burmese currency, either—they want it in dollars."

And, say democracy activists, the secret police—Burma's Military Intelligence, and its network of informers—are everywhere. "No one dares talk about current affairs or mention the word democracy because of the constant monitoring and phone taps," says Zar Ni, a Burmese student at the University of Wisconsin and founder of the Free Burma Coalition.

But while access to the means of communication is tightly controlled, the military itself makes wide use of high-tech systems to keep tabs on the democracy movement inside Burma.

Cellular phones from companies like Ericsson or Nokia, for example, are impossible to obtain for democracy activists, but widely used by Military Intelligence.

Given the Burmese military's stranglehold on technology inside the country, it's somehow appropriate that the rapidly-expanding movement in the West to boot the generals from power got its start on the Internet.

And recent reports indicate that the Burmese army is using the latest in Western technology to build a state-of-the-art cyber-warfare center in Rangoon. Built by an unnamed Singaporean company, the high-tech spy center "has been optimized for tapping domestic phone, fax, and email lines," according to an article in the September *Asian Defense Journal*.

One of the key targets of the center is the satellite telephone conversations of Burmese opposition groups, according to the March 1, 1998 issue of *Jane's Intelligence Review*.

Determined to catch any more would-be Leo Nichols, the spy center is also listening in closely to both regular phone and cellular phone calls and watching the faxes and email of foreign businessmen whom the government believes might be passing along messages for Aung San Suu Kyi or democracy activists.

Fighting For Freedom, On The Net

Given the Burmese military's stranglehold on technology inside the country, it's somehow appropriate that the rapidly-expanding movement in the West to boot the generals from power got its start on the Internet.

With no budget for telephone calls, advertising or glossy pamphlets, Zar Ni, who founded the Free Burma Coalition (*http://danenet.wicip.org/fbc*) in 1995, began using the Net to publicize the situation in Burma.

His Internet postings struck a chord among students, many of whom had recently seen the film *Beyond Rangoon*, which chronicled the bloody events of August 1988, when the armed forces in Burma shot thousands of students, Buddhist monks, and other pro-democracy demonstrators in the streets of Rangoon.

Top: Aung San Suu Kyi, winner of the 1991 Nobel Peace Prize, has been held under house arrest for most of the last nine years; bottom: The Free Burma Coalition was founded by Zar Ni, a Burmese student at the University of Wisconsin.

Soon, the email was flying, as students on nearly 75 college campuses in the US took the Pepsi-Cola company to task for its continued presence in Burma. After getting kicked off campus at Harvard, Stanford, UC Berkeley, and a number of other schools, and losing an estimated six million dollars in the process, Pepsi threw in the towel, announcing in January 1997 that it was pulling out of Burma. *USA Today* called it the "first revolt in cyberspace."

Today, the Free Burma movement has exploded into one of the most popular movements for human rights since the South Africa movement of the 1980s. Bishop Desmond Tutu of South Africa, in fact, calls Burma the "South Africa of the nineties." Using the anti-apartheid laws of the 1980s as a model, some 20 US cities and counties, including San Francisco, Oakland, Berkeley, and Alameda County, and the state of Massachusetts, have passed "Free Burma" purchasing laws. Similar laws are being considered in Los Angeles, Seattle, Minneapolis, and several state legislatures.

In response, dozens of Western companies, including many high-tech firms such as Apple, Oracle, Hewlett-Packard, and Motorola, have pulled out of Burma, cutting into the military's ability to finance it's arms and technology purchases. In May of last year, the US government banned any new investment in Burma by American companies, and the Canadian, British, and Norwegian governments have begun pressuring their companies to withdraw as well.

Back in Rangoon, meanwhile, Aung San Suu Kyi remains confined to her house by the military, forbidden to meet with journalists. The road leading to her home is blocked, and visitors are restricted. And when she picks up her telephone to make a call—if it works at all—the clicks on the line remind her that Military Intelligence is still listening. ◆

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Internet Shibboleths

What Your Speech Says About Your Online Life

By John S. Quarterman

You used to be able to tell a computer salesman who didn't know the Internet because they would always say "TC-IP" instead of "TCP/IP." I don't know what was so hard about that other P, but they wouldn't say it.

At a conference just now in Minneapolis, a prominent statistician referred to his "email number."

Does that make you wince, like it did me? It may be that a telephone number could be as natural an analogy as a paper mail address for what we put in the To: line mail message. But it isn't what anybody who has used electronic mail for any amount of time would call an electronic mail address.

I've been called the granddaddy of Internet monitoring, so feel free to picture me hobbling around with a cane, my white whiskers curling in the breeze, sort of like a cross between Uncle Sam and Colonel Sanders. (I still fondly remember the time I was walking through Shinjuku next to Ed Gould, himself also a rather large whiskered male type, and all the Japanese advertising girls went "Fatharu kurisumusa!")

Surely if you've been on the Internet for more than a year you've noticed a bunch of newcomers following after you. And about half of you probably have been on for more than a year. That's the way doubling in size every year works: Every year there are as many new Internet users as there were total users the year before.

Have you noticed the new users take a while to acculturate? You can usually spot the newest ones pretty easily. They complain when they get two copies of a message, and they can't figure out why that would happen. This often happens when somebody replies to a message the newbie sent to a mailing list. If the reply has a To: header in addition to copying the list, the original sender gets two copies: One because of the Cc:, and one through the list.

Or the newcomer complains of getting too much mail after receiving five messages in a single day.

Or you send them mail and they call you on the telephone.

Or you send them mail and (much worse) they send you a fax back!

Okay, this kind of behavior is fairly easy to spot. Fortunately, most newcomers do acculturate pretty quickly and stop doing it. Well, except for lawyers, who just love their faxes. And high-level executives, who just love their telephones. You know, the type who wishes out loud that electronic mail could be as easy to use as the telephone, and who has his secretary print out his mail. It was an executive type who said "email number."

Say The Secret Word...

Which leads me to the real topic of this column. What words or phrases mark a newcomer as a newbie? What terms are gaining popular usage despite the cane-waving of us old fogies? What just sounds so Cockney it would preclude an invitation to the Queen's Tea? I mean to include different terms for the same thing, different meanings for the same word, and different pronunciations of the same word. Any sort of verbal snobbery will do.

For example, do you pronounce URL as three syllables, as in You Are Ell? Or as a single word, as in Earl? If you're an old fogie like me, you sound out each letter in the acronym. If you're of one of the new generations (an Internet generation comes along about every 1.5 to 2.5 years), you may refer to Earls.

For that matter, do you remember it stands for Universal Resource Locator? If you never knew that, you're definitely a newcomer. Did you know the acronym expansion, and also the Earl pronunciation makes you want to hurl? You're definitely an old-timer, at least in Web-era Internet terms. (The first use of the Earl pronunciation that anybody I know can remember was by Daniel Dern when he jokingly referred to himself as the Duke of URL.)

This kind of thing also sometimes is a simple regional dialect difference. For example, there always used to be people who pronounced USENET as two syllables (as in Yooz Net), and those who pronounced it as three (Yoo Suh Net). The latter tend to be from the

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US northeast. The former tend to be from civilized parts of the world. (Just kidding. Mostly.) Do you not know what I'm talking about until I say newsgroups? Then you were clearly born yesterday.

This pronunciation difference leads us to our title word: Shibboleth. It's a Hebrew word (I don't know what it refers to in a literal sense) that was used by Gideon about 4,000 years ago to distinguish between his Gileadites and their enemies the Ephraimaites, as recorded in Judges XII, 4-6. Those who pronounced it as "shibboleth" with an "sh" sound were let to pass across a stream. Those who mispronounced it as "sibboleth," with a sibilant "s" sound, were sent abruptly in a very different direction. The word shibboleth is thus one of the oldest examples of a password. Military organizations have been using passwords for similar purposes ever since. Computer password usages are direct descendents of military password usages.

And that's what we're talking about here. Passwords into Internet society. Or passwords that denote one as a member of a segment of that society. The secret handshake. The old-school tie. The club catchphrase. The pronunciation that indicates you learned it from the oral tradition, rather than by reading or television.

You used to be able to tell a computer salesman who didn't know the Internet because they would always say "TC-IP" instead of "TCP/IP." I don't know what was so hard about that other P, but they wouldn't say it.

In days of yore, you could always tell outsiders by the way they said "Are Pay Net" instead of ARPANET. And of course there were the hoary old wars about whether it's ARPANET, the ARPANET, ARPA-net, ARPANet, or ARPA Computer Network. Fortunately we finally won the more recent one about whether it's Internet or the Internet. But the lower-case internet usage referring to the capital-I proper-name Internet is becoming depressingly common. For that matter, do you say "I-net?" Tee-hee.

Do you know what OSI was? You've probably been on the Net for at least five years, or you're a student of network history. Do you say "you'd better have a good reason for bringing that up!"? Then you've probably been on the Net for a dozen years or more; long enough to remember when ISO-OSI was going to replace TCP/IP within two years. I heard that prediction for at least ten years. It was one of the clearest Internet shibboleths.

Do you believe it every time someone predicts the Net will croak within a year? Or do you just mutter "Imminent Death of the Net Predicted!" If you do the latter, you're One of Us.

I must say I only jokingly refer to myself as an old-timer. Even though I've been using the Internet—and the ARPANET before it—since before all my office staff were born (as I like to remind them), I'm still a newcomer compared to the real old-timers. I worked at BBN when Frank Heart, Alex McKenzie, and all the others who designed and built the first IMPs were still there. At the mere mention of their names I doff my metaphorical cap and tug my missing forelock in deference.

An example of a neologism that has passed into common parlance is "email". I don't recall ever hearing anyone at BBN say that. It was always just mail.

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ARPANET was a Cold War project; maybe even that one of its goals was to develop network technology that could survive a nuclear war. Many of the early researchers will take great umbrage at such a suggestion. They personally were not working towards any such goal; none of the design documents ever said that; and so forth. And of course they're right. Which also of course doesn't mean it wasn't true; ARPA money was Navy money, as the researchers well knew, and at some level the answer to the question probably resides in decisions of high Navy brass and in the minutes of the Congressional committee meetings that voted the funds. But that's not the point. The point is that you can spot many of the real old-timers by their reaction to such an assertion.

> Do you believe it every time someone predicts the Net will croak within a year? Or do you just mutter "Imminent Death of the Net Predicted!" If you do the latter, you're One of Us.

By the way, do you know what an IMP was? If not, you really should do your required reading, you know, or you'll never pass the entrance exam for the club. May I be so bold as to suggest *The Matrix*, by yours truly, as a 770-page appetizer; followed by *Casting the Net*, by Peter Salus, as a pasta course; with *Where Wizards Stay Up Late*, by Katie Hafner and Matthew Lyon, as an entree; you doubtless would enjoy *Hackers: Heroes of the Computer Revolution*, by Steven Levy, as dessert.

Do you see the word hackers in that title and assume I'm recommending reading about criminals? Then you're not only a newbie; you're a newbie who has been snowed by irresponsible press stories.

When the press first discovered that there were criminals who break into computers and computer networks, they asked said criminals what they called themselves. They said "hackers," because they thought they were really smart, so they called themselves by a traditional name that indicates programming skill. The press never bothered to check on what else the word might mean or who else might have some claim to it; the press merely ran off in a pack yelping, "Hackers are breaking in! Hackers are breaking in!"

So if you only know the press meaning of the word hacker, you are definitely a newbie, no matter how long you've been on the Net. A better term for a computer criminal of this type, by the way, is "cracker."

Speaking of the press, do you "login to the

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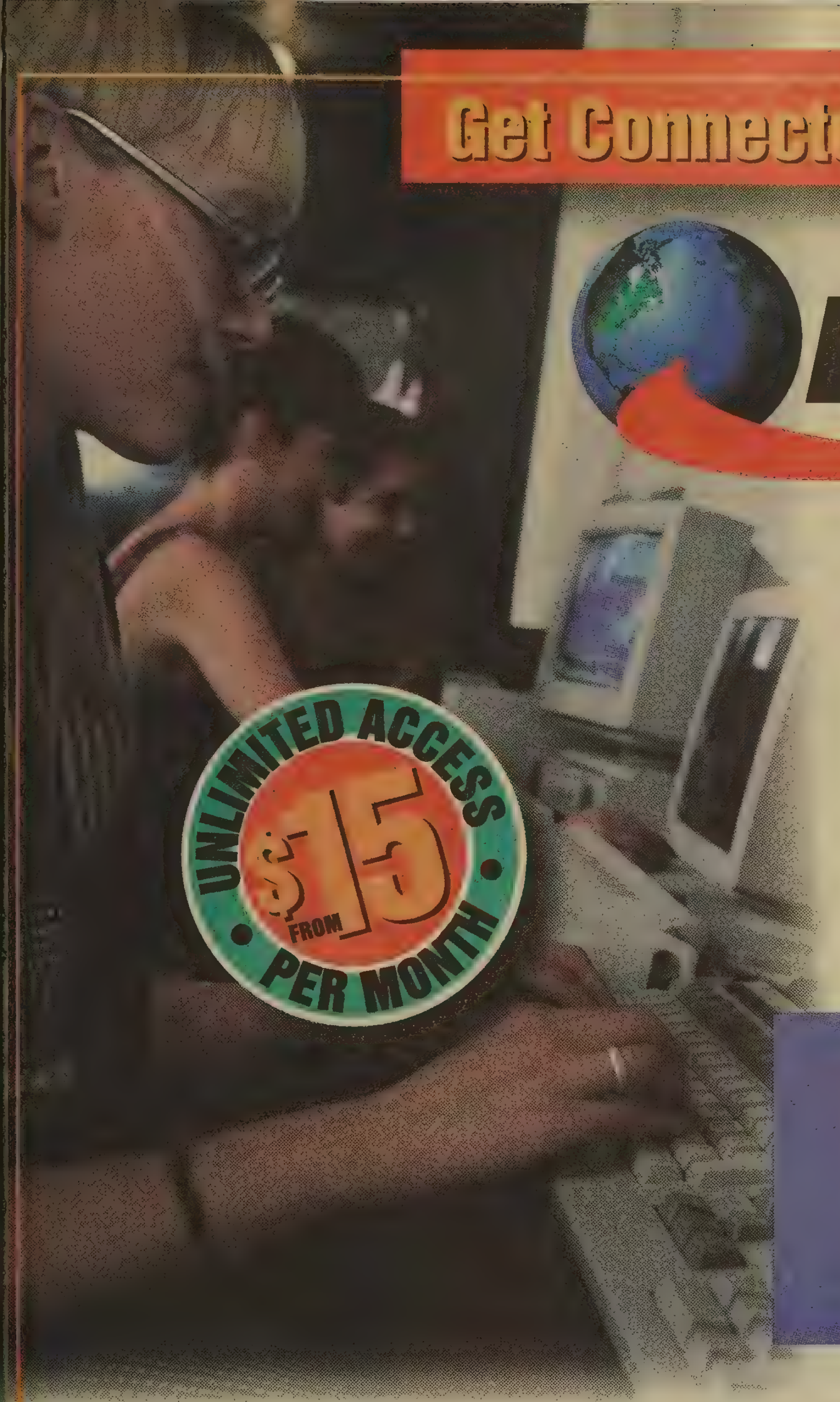

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Internet?" It seems to be mostly television that has popularized that silly phrase. Your computer probably has to log into a local Internet Service Provider (ISP) if you're using PPP, SLIP, or ISDN, (but probably not if you're connected by Ethernet, T-1, or T-3). But you don't log into the Internet, any more than you dial up the telephone system, or drive your car into the Interstate highway system, or turn on your television network. Apparently PC users weren't used to logins of any kind, and it was such a novelty to have to use a login name and password to get Internet access that "logging in" and "the Internet" became associated in some people's minds.

For that matter, do you know what PPP, SLIP, ISDN, Ethernet, T-1, and T-3 are, and how fast they are? Then you'd probably get along at IETF, the most and least exclusive Internet club in the world; the one that has almost no membership rules, yet that judges all its participants by the strictest standards.

On the Web front, somebody could probably write a thesis about pronunciations of "www" and "http://", as in *http://www.mids.org/* . Do you say "dubdubdub," "dubadubaduba," "dubyadubyadubya," "Web," "double-u-3," "3-dub," "triple-dub," or do you go for the full monte "double-u-double-u-double-u?" Do you say "h t t p colon slash slash" or "aitch tip?"

Should You Worry?

Do I take all this snobbishness seriously? Not really. I don't say Earl unless I'm referring to my real estate agent, and I do mention the word cracker whenever somebody misuses hacker. But I probably wouldn't refuse to eat at the same table as somebody who did differently. It's just a fun game to try to spot new usages and to note who is using them.

Do you see the word "hackers" in the title of Steven Levy's book and assume I'm recommending reading about criminals? Then you're not only a newbie; you're a newbie who has been snowed by irresponsible press stories.

So welcome aboard the good ship Internet. We're always conducting a seminar here; please take a reading list. You say you've made up a song? Well, see if you can get people to sing along. You never know, it might catch on.

Thanks to Peter Deutsch, Peter Flynn, and other netscribes for provoking this diatribe. ◆

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Telecommunications Reform: Two Years Later

Abundant Opportunities; Questionably Existent Competition

By Bill Gram-Reefer

Businesses, telecommuters, schools, government, and small and home offices want affordable high-speed services and are able to pay for them. In contrast, it is increasingly clear that hardly anyone is making money on slow, analog consumer services.

The Telecommunications Reform Act of 1996 promised a world of change for the telco arena. Primarily designed to create better, faster, and more telecommunications services through increased competition, the Telco Act opened the door to new opportunities, some of which have actually materialized.

In Theory...

Theoretically, Regional Bell Operating Companies (RBOCs) no longer have a monopoly on telephone services, including plain old telephone service (POTS), and other capabilities. Likewise, traditional long-distance companies including AT&T, MCI, and Sprint have the opportunity to offer customers local as well as long-distance services. An important part of this mix is Internet and remote access network services.

The overall vision of the Telecommunications Reform Act, as further defined by the FCC's working rules, was to encourage competing companies to build their own local networks to compete with existing phone companies. To enable the new players to get started, the Act gives them the legal right to access the existing physical plant of copper wire, which until 1996, was monopolized by the phone companies.

Items scheduled to be "unbundled" from the RBOCs control per FCC orders include:

- access to the local loops
- access to local and tandem switching
- use of existing interoffice transmission facilities and signaling
- access to operator services and directory assistance
- access to network interface devices
- access to operations support systems such as provisioning and maintenance.

Another element to the order includes "procedures for nondiscriminatory access" by cable and long line companies to poles, ducts, conduits, and rights-of-way owned by LECs or utilities. Also included in the FCC orders is a provision whereby new entrants have the right to the best terms negotiated for resale of services.

In theory, local exchange carriers (LECs) can compete directly with RBOCs in their region, or they can provide service outside their region to compete with other RBOCs. Competitive access providers (CAPs), who have existing fiber links connecting businesses and long-distance companies, and Internet service providers (ISPs) also now have new business opportunities because of the access the Telco Act gives them to the existing telecommunications infrastructure.

Emerging Reality

A key service local exchange carriers, competitive local exchange carriers (CLECs), competitive access providers and Internet service providers can provide high-speed Internet access to businesses, telecommuters, schools, government, and small and home offices. These customers want affordable high-speed services and are able to pay for them. DSL technology, for instance, offers higher speed and more competitive pricing compared to the cost and performance of 56K leased lines, ISDN or T1 services. Using DSL technology, access providers can once again be at the crest of the wave of the exploding high-bandwidth demand.

In contrast, it is increasingly clear that hardly anyone is making money on slow, analog consumer services. In fact, PSINet sold its consumer business to Mindspring Enterprises, while national ISPs including Netcom and USA.net announced last year, that they will no longer offer service for new individual dialup memberships. These companies have looked at what it takes to build the infrastructure to support millions of "curiosity seekers" (Netcom) and late adopters, and said "No." Rather, they and other smart companies have decided to focus on building services for "productivity seekers"—those markets willing to pay for high-speed services because their business demands it.

A small or independent telephone company, or national long-distance company acting as a local exchange carrier, now can access the LLP to provide POTS—as well as long-distance, even

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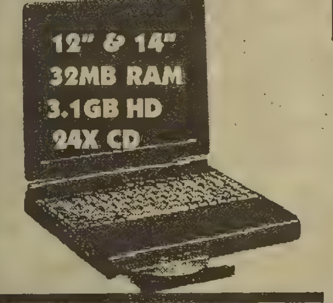

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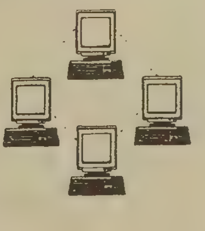

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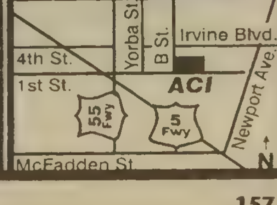

wireless—to the same customers as the resident RBOC. While it is presumably building its own network to compete with the RBOCs on every front, among other things, an LEC is able to use the existing telephone poles and offer (for a fee) the primary LEC's directory assistance services. Most importantly, an LEC has access to the copper lines already in the field. These copper lines, between the various Telco COs and customer/subscriber sites and between buildings, are accessible by competitors who can use these lines now to offer voice or dedicated high-speed data services.

A competitive local exchange carrier that is offering services within a limited area, perhaps a single metropolitan region, can also now access the RBOC's copper plant. In fact, a CLEC can now "co-locate" its equipment within a Telco's CO. From there, the CLEC, having access to the copper plant, can provide high-speed services to business customers.

The competitive access provider already has a fiber backbone around some metropolitan area that helps corporate customers link their LANs to the Internet or to remote LANs across the country. Using DSL technology, a CAP can further extend its network services to more companies that have been beyond the reach of its fiber ring.

Foot-Dragging And Other Developments

To be sure, all of the RBOCs know that there is a lot of money to be made in offering high-speed services to their customers, and some hope to keep this lucrative business—expected to approach $350 billion in the year 2000—to themselves. In fact some RBOCs are attempting to stall potential competitors from accessing the local loop plant.

Other RBOCs have taken a more enlightened approach. Perhaps having read the writing on the FCC's walls, they hope to learn how to be competitive while working with ISPs and other competitors in providing access to the local loop plant. The FCC, state public utility commissions, and industry forces, including established computer equipment vendors, long-distance companies, competitive access providers, and others will not likely let such an impediment stand for long.

In some regions, an Internet service provider is able to access an RBOC's copper plant without any difficulty so that it can provide high-speed data services to its customers. This can involve even co-location at a CO site. In other instances, where an RBOC chooses not to offer its unbundled loop plant all comers, an ISP could apply to become a CLEC to gain access to the loop plant, or gain access to the local plant through an established CLEC in that manner.

Unfortunately, there is very little new competition in the local telephone service market. A recent report by The Utility Reform Network (TURN) to the California Public Utilities Commission (CPUC) raised serious questions concerning Pacific Bell's claim that it no longer monopolizes local telephone service in California.

PacBell, which is owned by the Texas-based SBC Corp., had asked the CPUC to recommend that the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) approve its (PacBell's) application to enter California's lucrative long-distance market. Under the Telecommunications Act of 1996, the entry of "Baby Bells such as PacBell into long-distance markets is directly tied to elimination of their control over local markets."

continued on page 154

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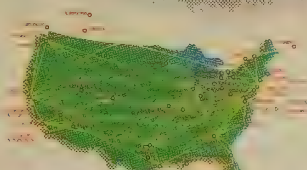

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PacBell filed more than 6,000 pages of documents attempting to prove they no longer monopolize California's local telephone service. But Thomas Long, TURN's senior telecommunications attorney, said, "After an exhaustive examination of the data, the only possible conclusion is that PacBell's claims of extensive competition are ridiculous." According to Long, less than 1% of PacBell's overall customer base is served by competitors using their own facilities, and only a minute fraction of those are residential customers. Resale of local service remains stagnant at 1.5% since the three biggest resellers, AT&T, MCI, and Sprint, have stopped marketing local service. In the past year, the number of new lines added by PacBell alone was more than double the total number of lines served by all other providers.

This analysis contrasts sharply with PacBell's April ads heard on the radio that featured a narrator explaining that PacBell had opened every door for competition replete with sound affects of a door opening. Sadly, the narrator explained, PacBell's competitors only shut the door to competition (accompanied by the sound of a door slamming shut). This from the same company that announced it wanted to telemarket phone services to its customers with unlisted numbers.

Meanwhile, before the Tennessee Regulatory Authority, Bell South, with much the same local exchange monopoly as PacBell, defended its appeal to enter the long-distance market by claiming it would give long-distance companies and other competitors "greater incentive to get into local services."

At the same time, in a turnabout from last year's reduction in long-distance rates, AT&T announced it will in fact start charging 45 million customers up to $0.95 to recover the $1.2 billion it pays to Baby Bells for completing long-distance calls whether or not they make a long-distance call during the monthly billing cycle. MCI has been arguing the same point in Virginia where it bills customers based on total charges for primary interexchange and universal service charges rather than only for interstate charges.

> *Some national ISPs have looked at what it takes to support millions of "curiosity seekers" and late adopters, and said, "No." They and other smart companies have decided to focus on building services for "productivity seekers"—those markets willing to pay for high-speed services because their business demands it.*

Two years later, this is how Telecommunications Reform is played.

TURN's report confirms that efforts to open up local phone markets have created negligible new competition in the marketplace. According to Long, most of PacBell's would-be competitors have pulled out of the local market, citing difficulty in accessing switches, loops and other services and equipment necessary to providing competitively priced local phone service. The 1996 Act requires that the Baby Bells provide genuine access to their exclusively controlled equipment and services before they can be granted permission to enter the long-distance market.

TURN's Long says, "Six thousand, six million or six billion documents won't change the fact that the supposedly open market has yet to provide consumers with any real choice. The Telecommunications Act requires actual, meaningful competition, which has yet to arrive in California." ◆

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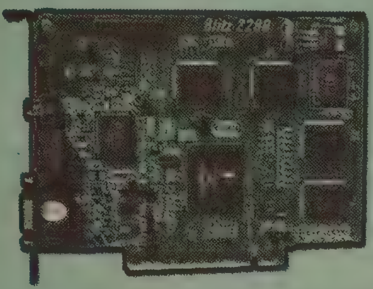

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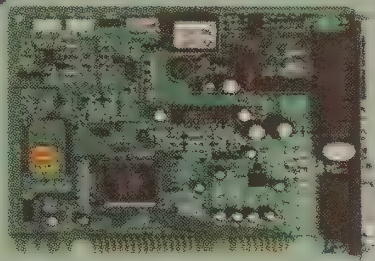

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Alexa, I'm Glad I Met Ya...

A Web Browser Add-On That Makes Surfing Sweeter

By Kevin Savetz

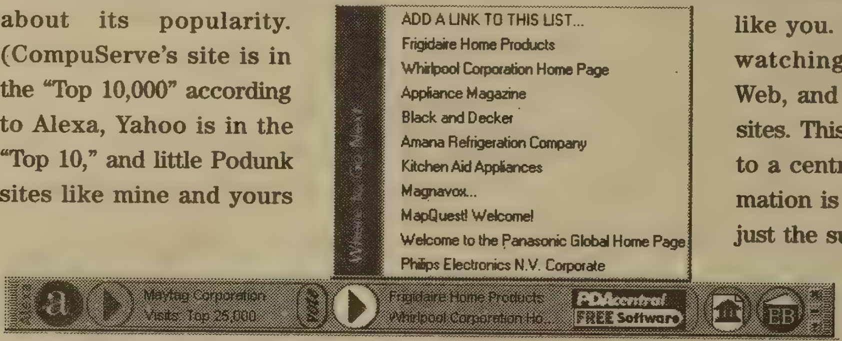
> ***When you visit a site, Alexa goes to work, displaying relevant information in its toolbar. The toolbar provides two primary kinds of information—about the site, and about other sites on the same topic.***

I'm not a big fan of software add-ons. Most browser add-ons, plug-ins and other doodads manage to underwhelm me with their utility while nibbling away at the stability of my computer system. In my book, a lot of those gadgets just aren't worth the trouble.

I've made an exception, though, for a program called Alexa—an add-on that makes surfing the Web faster, easier, and more informative.

After you download and install Alexa, you'll find a toolbar alongside your Web browser's window. When you visit a site, Alexa goes to work, displaying relevant information in its toolbar. The toolbar provides two primary kinds of information—about the site, and about other sites on the same topic.

When you visit a Web site, Alexa will tell you who owns the site and about its popularity. (CompuServe's site is in the "Top 10,000" according to Alexa, Yahoo is in the "Top 10," and little Podunk sites like mine and yours are humanely labelled "Moderate traffic.") Clicking on the arrow icon next to these stats reveals more information, including the number of links to the site from elsewhere, the number of pages that comprise the site, its speed and how often it is updated.

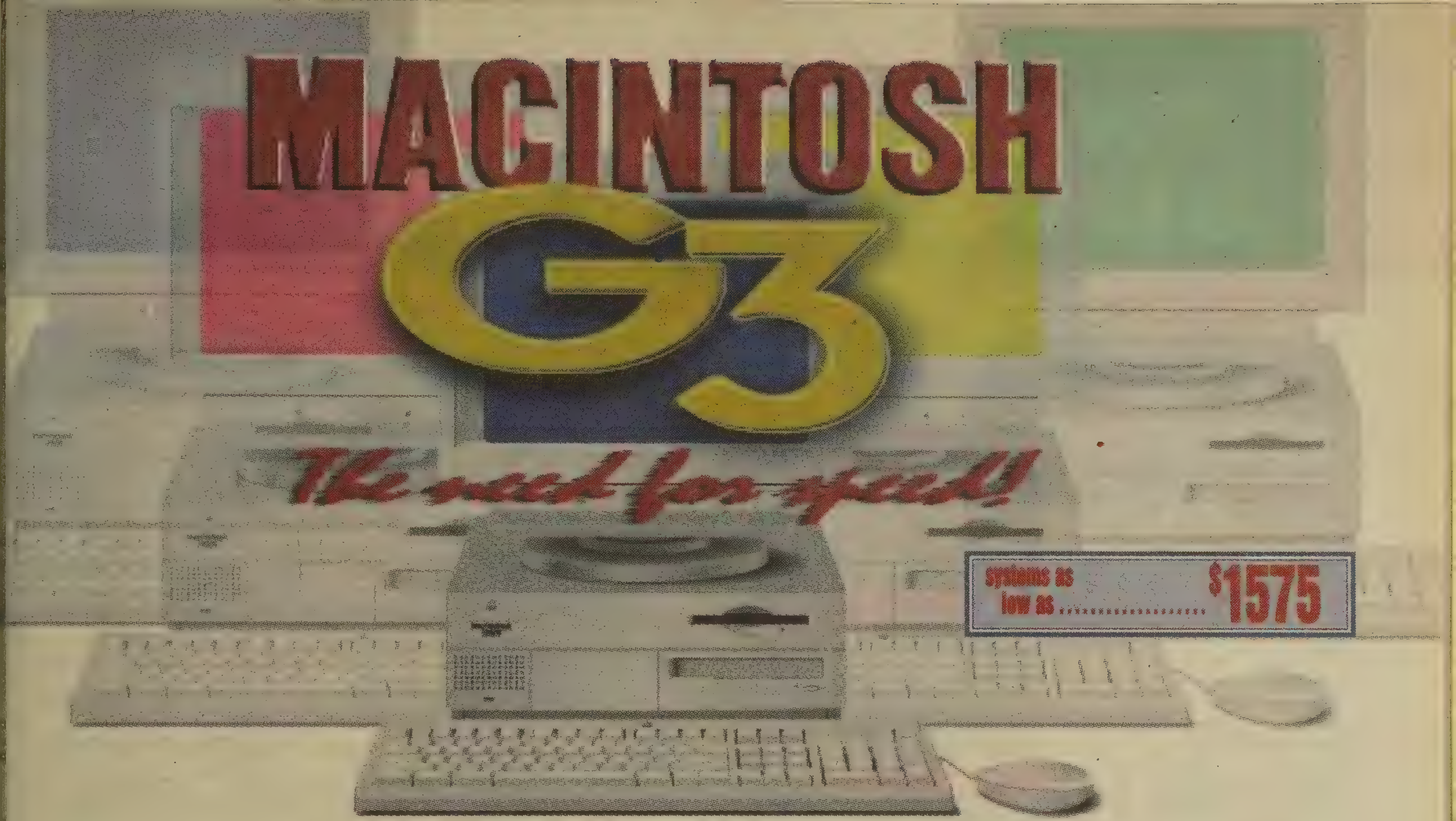


Just to the left on the toolbar is the feature that makes Alexa truly useful: The related links index. Here, a pop-up menu reveals a list of other sites on topics similar to the current one. For example, while visiting the clip art warehouse ArtToday (*www.arttoday.com*), the program recommended a desktop publishing site, a font archive and other clip art sites. Alexa creates this list with a combination of recommendations (the "add a link to this list" command allows you to suggest a site) and by watching the surfing patterns of its users. As a result, Alexa's list of related links usually contains a few questionable choices. (When I'm at the Maytag Appliances Web site, the recommendations of other appliance manufacturers' sites make perfect sense. But I am at a loss to explain why MapQuest, a mapping tool, is recommended as well.)

Despite these occasional eccentricities, once you've found one site that's what you want—or almost what you're looking for—the related links index makes it easy to find others. It provides the convenience of Excite's "more like this" function, without making you trundle off to a search engine to do it.

Where does that usage pattern data come from? It comes from Alexa users like you. The program works by watching where you go on the Web, and in what order you visit sites. This information is reported to a central database. That information is completely anonymous, just the surfing pattern of another nameless Web surfer. So you don't have to be embarrassed if you're a regular, closeted, visitor to the Spice Girls Web page.

Alexa can bring pages back from the dead, sort of. A major feature is its ability to access an archive when a page that you want to access is unavailable. When you happen across that all-too-common "404: file not found" message, you can tap the toolbar's Archive button to try to retrieve a stored copy of that page from Alexa's 8-terabyte archive (some 500,000 Web sites). It's a great feature, but don't bother pressing that Archive button unless you really want that information. You may have to wait several minutes while the server loads the page from tape. (You can keep surfing in the meantime—Alexa will inform you when the missing page is available from the archive.)



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Desktop Memory

Apple	8M	16M	32M	64M	128M
MAC G-3 (NEW)				149	309
8500, 9500 DIMMS		55	75	129	309
QUADRA 700,900, 950 (KT)	39	79		239	
QUADRA 800, 840 AV	25	38			
QUADRA 605, 610, 650		25	38		
CENTRIS 610, 650,660		29	38		
PERFORMA 450, 460, 466,467, 475,550,575,577,578	29	38			
MAC II, IICI, IICX, IIVI, IIVX, IIX, SE30	39	59	79		

AST	8M	16M	32M	64M	128M
ADVENTURE 200,400 (AMD)		45	75		
PREMIA 4/33,336,50D, 66D		59	79		
ADVANTAGE! PLUS/PRO		29		45	
BRAVO LC 5166,5200 (SDM)	45	75	159	269	
BRAVO MS 5166,5200(SDM)		45	75	159	269
MANHATTAN D 6200		69	89	159	269
MANHATTAN PRESC PRO 6200	69	89	159	269	
PREMIUM 486 (ALL)	CALL				

COMPAQ	8M	16M	32M	64M	128M
DESKPRO 2000 5166MMX (SD)	45		75	159	269
DESKPRO 4000 5166MMX (SD)		45	75	159	269
DESKPRO 6000 6233,6300(SDE)			89	185	309
DESKPRO XL 6150/6200 (DIM)	69	79	189	349	
DESKPRO 486 SERIES	CALL				
DESKPRO M SERIES EXP BOARD 0 MB			$119.00		
PROLINEA 486 SERIES	35		59	85	
PROSIGNIA 486/33, /66	35		59	85	
PRESARIO 400,600, 80035		59	85		
PRESARIO CDS 720,724,	35	59	85		
PRESARIO 8772 (SDRAM)		59	79		
PROLIANT 6000,6500, 7000 6200 NEW CALL					
PROLIANT 1500,6/200 FLEX (DIM			79	185	349
PROLIANT 2500,2500R (DIMM)			79	185	349
PROLIANT 486 SERIES		49	65		

DELL	8M	16M	32M	64M	128M
DIMNSION XPS D 233/266/300 **(NEW)**		79	185	329	
DIMNSION XPS M166/200		45	79		
XPS 133S,166S,200S,		45	79		
XPS P133V,P200V		45	79		
DIMENSION XPS H233,266		65	69	149	
DIMENSION XPS P100C,120C ED		49	65	105	
OPTIPLEX GXA PII 233,266,300 **(SDE)**			95	189	369
OPTIPLX GXI,GX PRO200 (DIMM)		69	79	189	349
OPTIPLEX GL,GM,GMT, (ED)		45	65	105	
OPTIPLX GS,GXL,GXMT(ED)		45	65	105	
PRECISION 486	45	59			
PERFORMANCE	45	59			
POWEREDGE 2100,4100,6100	69	79	185	349	
POWERDESKTOP	45	59			
POWERLINE WKST	45	59			
WORKSTATION 400 PII 266,300 NEW		79	185	349	

GATEWAY 2000	8M	16M	32M	64M	128M
E-1000,E-3000,E-3100(SD)			79	195	339
E-5000-2266,2300 (SDE)			95	189	349
PROFESSNL P5/100, (DIMM)		45	79		
P5/120, P5/133, P5/166,P5/200		45	79		
PC FAMILY P5/200 (DIMM)		45	79		
DESTN D-5 P5/200 MMX (DIMM)		45	79		
DESTINATION D6-180,6-200		45	79		

HEWLETT PACKARD	16M	32M	64M	128M
BRIO 8000,8100 SERIES (ED)	65	105		
KAYAK XA PII 233,266,300**(NEW)**		69	159	269
KAYAK XU/XW PII 233,266,300**(SDE)**	89	189	369	
PAVILLION 5010-7170 ED	45	65	105	
NETSERVER LH + 5/133/166	69	79	185	349
NETSERVER LH PRO PRO/20069	79	185	349	
NETSRVR LX PRO/LXE 6/166,6/20069	79	185	349	
VECTRA 500 SERIES (ED)	45	65	105	
VECTRA VL4 5/150,5/166	45	65	105	
VECTRA XA 6/180, 6/200	45	65	105	

IBM	8M	16M	32M	64M	128M
APTIVA 300,500&'M'	35	45			
APTIVA A SERIES ED		45	65		
APTIVA C21-C77	29	45	65		
APTIVA C3D,C3E,C8E,C9E(SDRM		45	79		
APTIVA S3C,S35,S8C,S9C,S9SDR	45	79			
APTIVA S64-S90 ED		45	65	105	
PC 300 GL (SDRM)		45	79		
PC 330 6576 SER (PENT)		45	65	105	
PC 700 SERIES PENTIUM		45	65	105	
PC 730 SERIES PENTIUM		45	65	105	
PC 750 SERIES PENTIUM		45	65	105	
PC 300 XL PENTIUM II (MDL6588)	69	79	185	349	
PC SRVR 325 PRO 180/200 (8369	69	79	185	349	
PC SERVER 330 PRO 200 (8640/69)	69	79	185	349	
INTELLISTATION Z PRO 2D,3D	69	79	185	349	
PREMIER PS/2 56,57,58	35	39	59		
MULTIMEDIA M77	35	59	89		
PS/1 ADVISOR/ESSENTIAL	35	59	89		
PS/1 INVESTOR/WILLOW	35	59	89		
PS/VALUEPOINT486 (ALL):	35	59	89		

MICRON	16M	32M	64M	128M
MILLENNIA XKU PII 266,300(SDRM)	79	159	269	
MILLENNIUM PRO 2 (DIMM)	69	79	185	349
VETIX EL 1000N,2000N (DIMM)	69	79	185	349
VETIX LXI(DIMM)	69	79	185	349
POWERDIGM XLI (DIMM)	69	79	185	349
POWERDIGM XSU (SDE)		95	189	369

NEC TECHNOLOGY	16M	32M	64M	128M
DIRECTION SPL 233,266,300(SD)		79	159	269

Workstation Memory

Kingston TECHNOLOGY CORPORATION

IBM
RISC 6000 SERVERS - RISC 6000 STATIONS

SILICON GRAPHICS
INDIGO - POWER INDIGO
ONYX - CHALLENGE SERIES
O2 SERIES (NEW)
OCTANE SERIES (NEW)

Sun MICRO SYSTEMS
SPARC STATIONS 4,5,10,20, LX SERIES
IPX - ULTRA , CLASSIC SERIES

COMPAQ
PROFESSIONAL-5000

HEWLETT PACKARD
HP VECTRA -
VECTRA XW 6/200 SERIES
HP APOLLO WORKSTATION

C.O.D

SDRAM 168-PIN ECC

SDRAM 32X72 -8ns 3.3v ECC 256MB		735
SDRAM 16X72 -8ns 3.3v ECC 128MB		335
SDRAM 8X72 - 8ns 3.3v ECC 64MB		169
SDRAM 32X64 -8ns 3.3v	256MB	659
SDRAM 16X64 -8ns 3.3v	128MB	295
SDRAM 8X64 -8ns 3.3v	64MB	135

SDRAM 168-PIN NON-ECC

SDRAM 32X72 -10ns 3.3v ECC 256MB		585
SDRAM 16X72 -10ns 3.3v ECC 128MB		275
SDRAM 8X72 - 10ns 3.3v ECC 64MB		145
SDRAM 32X64 -10ns 3.3v	256MB	529
SDRAM 16X64 -10ns 3.3v	128MB	209
SDRAM 8X64 -10ns 3.3v	64MB	109
SDRAM 4X64 -10ns 3.3v	32MB	49

168 Pin Dimm

16X72-60 EDO-ECC 3.3V BF/UBF	(128MB)	256
8X72-60 EDO-ECC 3.3V BF/UBF	(64MB)	159
4X72-60 EDO-ECC 3.3V BF/UBF	(32MB)	65
2X72-60 EDO-ECC 3.3V BF/UBF	(16MB)	49
16X64-60 EDO 3.3V UBF	(128MB)	279
8X64-60 EDO 3.3V UBF	(64MB)	115
4X64-60 EDO 3.3V UBF	(32MB)	55
2X64-60 EDO 3.3V UBF	(16MB)	45

72-Pin Simms

SIMM 32X32-60 EDO	(128MB)	285
SIMM 16X32-60 EDO H	(64MB)	145
SIMM 16X32-60 EDO L	(64MB)	105
SIMM 8X32-60 EDO	(32MB)	42
SIMM 4X32-60 EDO	(16MB)	25
SIMM 2X32-60 EDO	(8MB)	17
SIMM 1X32-60 EDO	(4MB)	11
FAST PAGE MODE (FPM) - NON-EDO:		
SIMM 32X32-60	(128MB)	295
SIMM 16X32-60 H	(64MB)	145
SIMM 8X32-60	(32MB)	45
SIMM 4X32-60	(16MB)	28
SIMM 2X32-60	(8MB)	19
SIMM 1X32-60	(4MB)	12

72-Pin Parity Simms

TRUE PARITY:		
SIMM 32X36-60	(128MB)	279
SIMM 16X36-60 H	(64MB)	195
SIMM 16X36-60 L	(64MB)	145
SIMM 8X36-60	(32MB)	75
▶ SIMM 8X36-70	(32MB)	72
SIMM 4X36-60	(16MB)	45
▶ SIMM 4X36-70	(16MB)	44
SIMM 2X36-60	(8MB)	35
SIMM 2X36-70	(8MB)	34
SIMM 2X36-80	(8MB)	31
SIMM 1X36-60	(4MB)	19
SIMM 1X36-70	(4MB)	17

H=High Density L=Low Density

30-Pin Simms

▶ SIMM 16X9-60 (9-CHIP)	(16MB)	55
SIMM 16X9-70 (9-CHIP)	(16MB)	59
SIMM 4X9-60 (9-CHIP)	(4MB)	18
SIMM 4X9-80 (9-CHIP)	(4MB)	17
SIMM 1X9-60 (9-CHIP)	(1MB)	10
SIMM 1X9-70 (9-CHIP)	(1MB)	9
SIMM 1X3-60 (9-CHIP)	(1MB)	8
NON PARITY:		
SIMM 16X8-60 (9-CHIP)	(16MB)	49
SIMM 16X8-70 (9-CHIP)	(16MB)	54
SIMM 4X8-60 (9-CHIP)	(4MB)	16
SIMM 1X8-60 (9-CHIP)	(1MB)	9
SIMM 1X8-70 (9-CHIP)	(1MB)	8

Video Memory

	2M	4M	6M	8M	12M
ATI 3D PRO TURBO	89	179			
ATI XCLAIM 3D (SGRAM)		179			
ATI 3D XPRESSION (SDRAM)79					
MATROX MILLENIUM WRAM		139	189		
MATROX MILLENIUM II				CALL	CALL
MATROX MYSTIQUE (SGRAM)59					

Notebook Memory

Apple	8M	16M	32M	64M
EPIC 1400 SERIES NOTEBOOK (NEW)	89	149	229 (24MB)	
520/C, 540/C	79	115	219	

ACER	8M	16M	32M	64M
750,750C	75	109		
730,735C,760C,760CX,780CX	65			
782,784,786,787,760I	39	69		
NUOVO 971,972,970DX,970MMX	49	65	115	
PRO 950 ,954,955,956,957,958,959	55	75	135	
LIGHT 350P ,356,358,359,361	55	75	135	
LIGHT MULTIMED 382,383,384		55	75	135

AST	4M	8M	16M	32M	64M	
POWEREXEC486SL/33, 425L			95			
425L SPECIAL EDITION			95			
BRAVO NB/EXPLORER	35		75			
ADVANTAGE EXPLORER 212	55	75				
ASCENTIA A 41, A42,A70 MMX			49	65	119	209
ASCENTIA J SERIES (KIT)			55	75	135	
ASCENTIA P SERIES (NEW)		59	89	149		
ASCENTIA 900, 910N,950N		59	89			
ASCENTIA 800, 810/N		65	89			

AT&T	4M	8M	16M	32M	64M
SAFARI 3151/3181	49	65	89		
GLOBALYST 130	29	39	69		

AUSTIN NOTEBOOK	4M	8M	16M	32M	64M
BUSINESS AUDIO XL DX4			59	149	
DX4/DX2/SX2/SX	55		179		
VISTA	49	75	129		

Canon	4M	8M	16M	32M	64M
NOTEJET 486C (BN100)	39	69			
NOTEJET 486 (BN22)	49	69			
NOTEJET II (BN32)	49	69			
NOTEJET III/III CX	29	39	75		
IINNOVABOOK 1100T		59	75	135	
IINNOVABOOK 10C SUB	49		125		
IINNOVABOOK 150C, 175C	49		125		
IINNOVABOOK 350,360,475	29	39	69		
IINNOVABOOK 480, 490		39	69		
IINNOVA 200LS	49	75	125		
IINNOVA 486NX	45	69			

COMPAQ SPECIAL
PRESARIO 1208 1210 1610 1620 1680 $95

COMPAQ	8M	16M	32M	64M	
ARMADA 1100,1100T,1120,1125		49	79	115	209
ARMADA 1130,1130T	49	79	115		
ARMADA 1510DM,1520DM,1550MT	49	79	115	209	
ARMADA 7710,7730,7750		49	79	115	209
ARMADA 4100	49	79	129	215	
CONCERTO 425/433	65	95			
CONTURA 4/25,C,CX	65	95			
CONTURA 400C,410C,420,430C		69	95 (185 24MG)		
CONTURA AERO 4/33C	69	105			
LTE ELITE 4/25/C, 4/75/C	65	95			
LTE 5000,5100,5200,5300,540	59	95	115	219	
PRESARIO 1010, 1020, 1030,1040	49	75	95		
PRESARIO 1060,1070,1080	49	75		95	
PRESARIO 1210, 1610,1680		75	95	239	

CTX EZ BOOK	8M	16M	32M	64M
CTX EZ500T	39	69		

DEC PC	4M	8M	16M	32M	64M
425SE/433 SE COLOR	49		95		
425SL, 433SLC PREMIUM		49		95	
HI-NOTE/HI-NOTE ULTRAI	39	55	69		
HI-NOTE VP 520/525/535/545		49	79	129	209
HI-NOTE VP CSS,LSS 575/5100/5120		49	79	129	199

DELL	4M	8M	16M	32M	64M
INSPIRON 3000 M200, M233(NEW)			75	119	229
LATITUDE CP M166T,M233XT,			69	119	219
LATITUDE LM P100SD,P133S	49	79	139		
LATITUDE LX475D,4100D/T	39	49	69		
LATITUDE 433/C, CX, 425		45		95	
LATITUDE XP 4100CX,450C/CX	29	42	69		
LATITUDE 433M, MX, MC,		39	69	89	

EVEREX	8M	16M	32M	64M
STEPNOTE 5	49	79	139	
STEPNOTE MMX	49	79	139	199

EPSON	4M	8M	16M	32M	64M
ACTION NOTE 500C	55				
ACTION NOTE 650/660C	45	69	105		
ACTION NOTE 890CX, 890C	35	49	85		
ACTION NOTE 895C, 910		35	49	85	

FUJITSU	8M	16M	32M	64M
LIFEBOOK 500,600,700 TX SERIES		75	119	229
LIFEBOOK 400,500,600 SERIES		49	75	119
MILAN,MONTECARLO,MONTEGO	49	75	119	209

GATEWAY 2000	4M	8M	16M	32M	64M
COLORBOOK			149		
HANDBOOK			69		
LIBERTY		45	69		
NOMAD/NOMAD N	75		345		
SOLO S90,S120,V75 (NEW)		59	79	135	
SOLO 2100, 2200 (NEW)		59	105	129	
SOLO 2300 (NEW)			75	119	229
SOLO 9100 SERIES (NEW)			75	119	229

HEWLETT PACKARD	8M	16M	32M	64M
OMNIBOOK 530, 600/C		59	149 (530 ONLY)	
OMNIBOOK 600CT 4/75		59		
OMNIBOOK 800C,800	59	105	195	259
OMNIBOOK 2000	55	79	129	229
OMNIBOOK 3000CTX		CALL	CALL	
OMNIBOOK 4000 C/CT	65	89		
OMNIBOOK 5000,5500 CT,CTS	59	79	129	229
OMNIBOOK 5700TX (MMX)	59	79	129	229

HITACHI	8M	16M	32M	64M
C-SERIES NOTEBOOK	49	79	119	
E-SERIES NOTEBOOK	55	85	129	
M-SERIES NOTEBOOK	55	95	129	
M-X MMX SERIES NOTEBOOK	59	89	179	
VISIONBOOK PLUS 4140 4150,4360	49	79	119	179
VISIONBOOK PRO 7340,7360,7560	49	79	119	179

IBM SPECIAL
THINKPAD 365XD, 560, 760ELD, 760XL, 765D - 32MB $115

IBM	4M	8M	16M	32M	64M
CL57LSX	59	79			
PS/NOTE 2618	55	75	125		
PS/NOTE 182, N82, L40SX	55	75			
THINKPAD 340	45	65			
THINKPAD 350, 350C	45	75	105		
THINKPAD 355, 355C.360C/CS	45	65	109		
THINKPAD 365C,CS,CD,E,ED	29		79		
THINKPAD 365 X,380,385D		49	75	115	
THINKPAD 510/CS,(500 8MG MAX)	45	55	109		
THINKPAD 560 (NEW)		49	75	115	
THINKPAD 560E		49	75	115	179
THINKPAD 700/C, 720/C	49	79			
THINKPAD 701 BUTTERFLY	29	45	75		
THINKPAD 750/C/CS/P	45	69	129	225	
THINKPAD 755CS DX2/4	55	69	129	225	
THINKPAD 760C (NEW)		65	95	149	
THINKPAD 760 E,EL,ELD (NEW)		49	75	115	179
THINKPAD 770 (SD)			79	119	229

MICRON	4M	8M	16M	32M	64M
MILLENNIUM TRANSPORT		59	75	129	
MILLENIUM TRANSPORT XPE			79	119	

MIDWEST MICRO	4M	8M	16M
ELITE SNDBOOK 486/486 I I	45	69	105
ELITE SNDBOOK PLUS (PENT)	45	69	109

NEC	4M	8M	16M	32M	64M
VERSA E/M/V/P		55	75	135	
VERSA S, 2000, 2200C	29	42	75		
VERSA 2400,2405,2435		49	75		
VERSA 2600		49	79	129	209
VERSA 4000		65	79	129	
VERSA 6000H,6030H		69	85	129	
VERSA 6050MH,MHX P150 MMX		69	85	129	219
VERSA 6200MX P166 MMX		49	79	129	219

PACKARD BELL	2M	8M
STATESMAN/STATESMAN +	39	75

SAMSUNG	4M	8M	16M	32M	64M
S3945T/SENS 700/800	59	75	109		
SENS 500		49	79	139	209
SENS 810		75	105	129	

SHARP	4M	8M	16M	32M	64M
3010 3050	29	42	75		
3020,3060 PENTIUM	29	42	75		
3030, 3040, 3070		59	89	129	
7700/7750/8150,8650,8660		45		89	
8700,8800,8900	45	69	105		
9000/9030		55	89	129	
9020/9050		55	89	129	
9040/9070		59	79	129	
9080		59	79	129	
WIDENOTE		49	79	119	

SONY	16M	32M	64M
VAIO PCG-705C,707C,717C,719C	75	115	229

TEXAS INSTRUMENTS	4M	8M	16M	32M	64M
TI 4000E, 4000M	79		279		
TI 5000,5100,5200,5300		79	89		
TI 6020,6030,6050,6160		49	79	119	
TI EXTENSA 455 SERIES (NEW)	29	45	69		
TI EXTENSA 510/515/550/560/575		59	75	119	
TI EXTENSA 600,650,660SERIES		49	79	129	

TOSHIBA SPECIAL
TOSHIBA 100C/200/400/610 32MB—only $109

TOSHIBA	8M	16M	32M	48M	64M	128M
TOSHIBA 100C/200/400/610	49	65	109			
710CD/720CDS/730/740	49	65	109		239	489
PROTEGE 650 CT,660 CDT	49	69	119		229	
SATELLITE 225,440,460	49	69	119	169		
TECRA 500/550/650/660	49	69	119	169		439
TECRA T700CS/CT (SYNC)75	105	189				
T1900,1900CT,1950,1960	65	95				
4500/4700/4800/4900	65	95	189			
T6400/6600	65	95	189			
T2100, T2150CDS/CDT	65	75		119 (24MG)		
PROTEGE 2400/3400/3600	42	69				

TWINHEAD	4M	8M	16M	32M	64M
SLIMNOTE "E" 486DX	49		89		
SLIMNOTE 5	49	69	89		
SLIMNOTE 6	49	69	89		
SLIMNOTE 8		69	89	129	

WINBOOK	4M	8M	16M	32M	64M
WINBOOK XL (NEW)			69	149	249
WINBOOK XP			79	139	
WINBOOK XP 5 (NEW)				145	
WINBOOK FX (NEW)		59	79	149	

ZENITH	4M	8M	16M	32M	64M
Z-STAR 433VL		75			
Z-STAR EX	39		69		
Z-NOTE FLEX/ES/EX/GT	35	55	69		
Z-NOTE MX	49		89		
Z-NOTE 6000		69	89	139	
Z-NOTE 6200		49	79	139	209

CPU UPGRADES

INTEL

Pentium 166 MHz	$89
Pentium 200 MHz	$150
Pentium 166 MHz MMX	$100
Pentium 200 MHz MMX	$110
Pentium 233 MHz MMX	$140
Pentium II 233 MHz w/512 Cache	209
Pentium II 266 MHz w/512 Cache	269
Pentium II 300 MHz w/512 Cache	395
Pentium II 333 MHz w/512 Cache	540
AMD	
K6-166MHz MMX	$115
K6-200MHz MMX	$109
K6-233MHz MMX	$119

PCMCIA Cards

SRAM CARDS		FLASH CARDS (ATA)		/COMPACT
64K	$39			
128K	55	4MB	$89	$85
256K	65	8MB	119	129
512K	95	12MB	149	169
1MB	105	16MB	175	149
2MB	159	20MB	209	339
4MB	309	40MB	359	

Flash Memory for Digital Cameras

APPLE, CASINO ZOOMER, CHINNON, HP OMNIGO, KODAK DC'S,NIKON E2, SONY MAGILINK, ETC.

Printer Memory

BROTHER	1MB	2MB	3MB	4MB
HL-8D/8E/8V	65	75		115
HL-10V/10DV/10PS		69		99
HL-4/4PS/4V/4VE		75		115
HL-6/6T/6V		65		99
HL-630/631/641/645	43		55(1.5MB)	
HL-720/730		45(1.5MB)		
HL-660/960/1260		42(4MB)		65 (8MB)
LASER/FAX MFC 3900ML	39		55(1.5MB)	
4000ML/4500ML/5000ML LASER UPGRADE/CALL FOR MEM/FAX SIDE				
FAX 4550/6550/7550(NEW)	65	85		

Canon	1MB	2MB	3MB	4MB
LBP 430/860/1260				39
LBP 4SX		75		115
LBP 811/B/T		45		65
LBP-8SX		79		115
LBP-4/LITE PLUS	95	139		

EPSON ACTION LASER	1MB	2MB	4MB	5MB
1500 1000		59		
5000, 5200		55	95	
ACTION LASER II		69	89	105
EPL 6000		85	115	
EPL 7000		69		

EPSON	4MB	8MB	16MB	32MB
1100(4MB ONLY)/1600	39	55	69	95

HEWLETT PACKARD	8MB	16MB	32MB
HP 4000/5000N NEW		59	955

HP	2MB	4MB	8MB	16MB
HP 4, 4M, 4SI	29	49	59	
HP 4		(postscript 249)		
HP 4P, 4MP, HP4V,5M,5N,5P,5SI	29	19	29	55
HP4L, ML (1MEG ONLY)		$39		
HP 5L,5L-FS	35	43	69	
HP550,C, 560,C (256K ONLY)		$29		
HPII/IID	45	65		
HPIII,IIIP, IIP	45	65		
PAINTJET XL300		65	85	

IBM	1MB	2MB	3.5MB	4MB
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Back in Alexa's toolbar, you'll also find quick access to an online dictionary and encyclopedia. Oh, and you'll notice a postage-stamp-sized advertisement there as well. (Hey, it's a free program. Learn to live with it.)

Alexa won't force you through the trouble of upgrading every time a better version comes along. Its "auto update" capability means that enhancements will be installed without taking your time or attention. Remind me again why all programs don't have this capability?

For PCs, Alexa requires a 486 or Pentium family processor running Windows 95 or NT. It also requires Netscape Navigator or Microsoft Internet Explorer 3.0 or later—other browsers, such as Opera, won't work with it. On the Mac side, Alexa is still being alpha tested—and is prone to occasional crashes, as alpha versions are wont to be. It requires a PowerPC running MacOS 7.5 or later. You can get more information about Alexa or download the program from *www.alexa.com* . ◆

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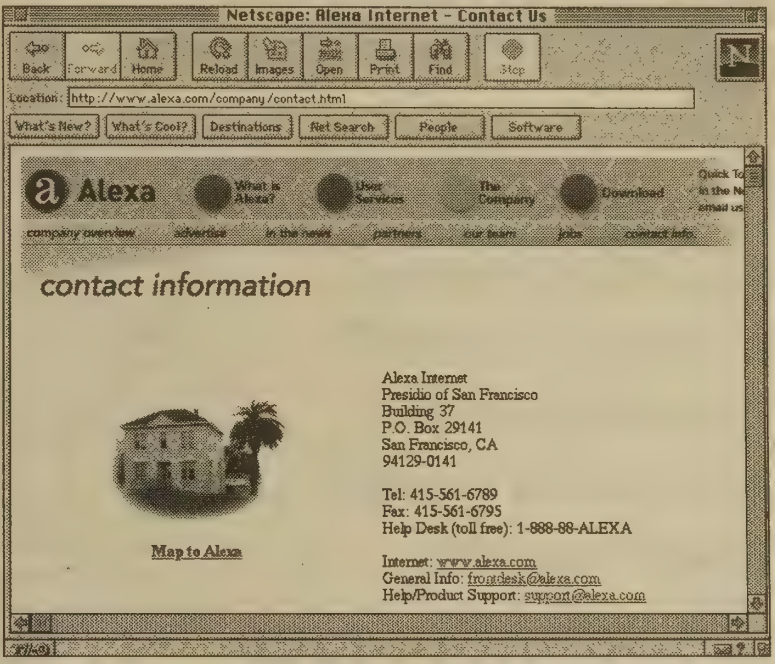
> ***Alexa won't force you through the trouble of upgrading every time a better version comes along. Its "auto update" capability means that enhancements will be installed without taking your time or attention. Remind me again why all programs don't have this capability?***



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Cable Modem

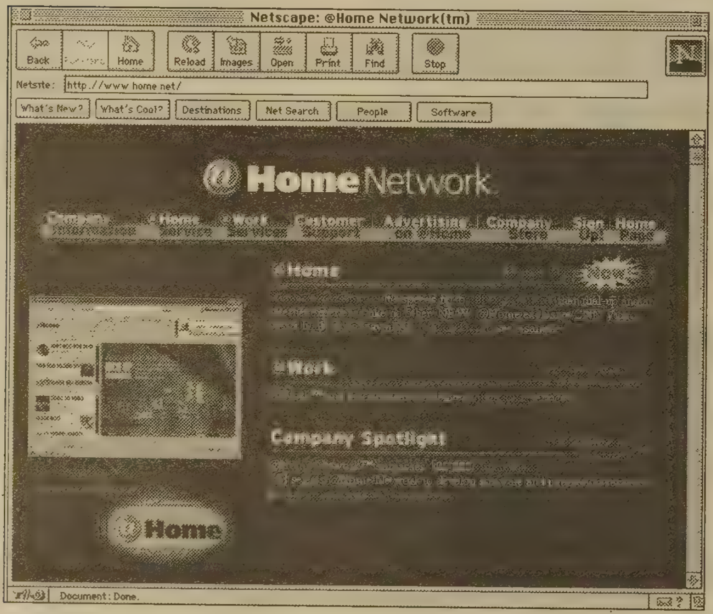
Is This The Next Standard?

By Ed Kahn

Click the @Home icon and you will be online within seconds. It is easy to change the default home page and there is no disadvantage to doing this.

Logging onto my Internet Service Provider has become a chore. Between busy signals, unexplained disconnects, and failures to recognize my password make the process of getting online more frustrating than fun or productive. Even with newer, faster modems and the latest communications software, the problems persist. In short, the main bottleneck surrounding the information superhighway is access.

Recently, I read in the local newspaper that the ability to connect to the Internet via cable was coming to my neighborhood. Curious, I called my local cable company, but they knew nothing. A few days later, I received a phone call from someone trying to sell me services to the @Home Network. The service costs $39.95 per month, plus $150 for installation. This gives you full-time, unlimited access at speeds roughly 100 times faster than a 28.8Kbps modem or 15 times faster than ISDN.



Netsite: http://www home net/

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The sales rep explained the service to me and started asking for details about my computer system. The next thing I know, we were setting up an appointment to get connected. The night before installation they called to confirm the appointment and to make sure that I had backed up my entire system. The next day a team of three technicians arrived. The first two were computer network specialists who installed a network card and software onto my computer. The third technician was a cable installer who strung the cable to my computer. The installation process took a little over an hour and includes the network card, cable modem, and all the software to make everything work.

When they were done, I was connected to a network all the time. This means that when I want to go online, I simply click on the icon on my monitor and I am there—no dialing in, no waiting to be connected, and no getting bounced off line!

The default home page is @Home Net, which provides access to a range of features that are not available through a standard dial-up modem connection. In fact, @Home Net's home page cannot be reached via a telephone modem. The weather and news headlines greet you, but you also now have high-speed access to local news, national news, search engines, entertainment news, and nearly 20 other features.

The software that @Home Net installs is a complete package. The browser is a customized version of latest offerings from Netscape. (While this is not the place for a browser review, I like it a lot and find it works better on my system than Microsoft Internet Explorer.) In addition, the software package includes RealPlayer, for real-time audio and video streaming directly from the Web. This is an integral part of the @Home service because it lets you view news clips and listen to audio feeds. It is not necessary, but if you prefer, the upgrade to RealPlayer 5.0 is $29.95 and gives you added capabilities.

Because you are now connected to the Net all the time, a few things will be different on your computer. The first difference you will notice is when you boot-up, you will be asked for a password to get into Windows 95. (I do not know if the Mac interface is different.) If you choose not to use a password, you will still be asked for one. Just strike the enter key to continue. From there, your desktop will look and act as you expect.

Click the @Home icon and you will be online within seconds. It is easy to change the default home page and there is no disadvantage to doing this because you can return to the @Home home page by clicking on the red dot icon on the menu bar of Netscape. Traveling from site to site is not instantaneous, but pretty darned close to it. I can now be on the phone with someone and visit one or several Web sites without the typical click-and-wait experience with telephone modems. This service makes the Internet nearly as available as I had always hoped it would be.

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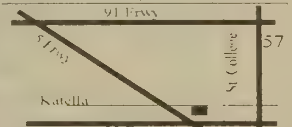

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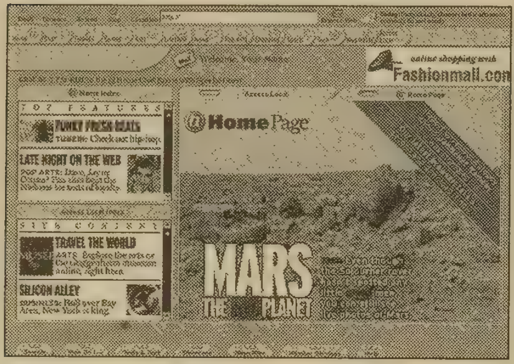
The modem, made by Motorola, is larger than most of the external modems I have used over the years. It has its own power supply and the instructions were to leave it on all the time. As soon as you turn your computer on, you have access to the Web. Unlike a telephone modem, you do not see flashing lights to indicate that data is passing back and forth. There are only three indicator lights: one for power, one to show a cable connection, and one to indicate that you are connected to the computer. I still have my phone modem for faxes and a few services I use that have direct dial-in.



@Home gives you three email address. I kept the email address that I have had for a decade. I simply stopped using the dial-in feature of my ISP and access my email is through the cable modem. This turned out to be easy—when I click the Eudora icon I am instantly online and my new messages download.

The cost of $39.95 may seem a bit steep, but for me it means the difference between using the Web for things that *have* to be done versus using it for all kinds of things. For instance, a few days ago I wanted to check on freeway conditions. In the past I knew that I could find this information on the Web, but it was simply too cumbersome. With @Home I could log on, find what I wanted, and go.

The cost of $39.95 may seem a bit steep, but for me]it means the difference between using the Web for things that have to be done versus using it for all kinds of things.

At present this service is not available in all areas, but many of the cable companies are working at breakneck speed to bring it to your neighborhood. When it is available, I encourage you to sign up.

@Home is not a cable company. Rather, it is a new venture that has made alliances with many cable companies. It is their hope that cable access to the Internet will be available everywhere. In the following resources, I list the provider I use. If you use a different cable company, call them directly to see when they will have access to @Home Net. ◆

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Resources:

@Home Network
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- ATI Xpert @Work 8MB SGRAM AGP (MPEG 30fps, CDi, AVI)
- 17" Mag DX700T .25mm, 1280x1024, Non-Interlaced.
- 2 Serial Ports, 2 USB Ports, 1 Parallel Port & 1 Game Port
- 1.44MB Teac Floppy Drive
- Microsoft Keyboard and Microsoft Mouse
- Creative PC-DVD x2 DVD CDROM Drive (2nd generation)
- Creative Dxr2 Decoder MPEG-2 Card
- Sound Blaster PCI Ensoniq Sound Card
- Grolier Encyclopedia 1998
- 320 Watt Hi-Fi Surround Sound Stereo Speakers
- ATX form factor Mid Tower Case (7 Bays & 230W UL PS)
- 56K v.90 Internal Fax/Modem w/Voice Mail and Speakerphone
- MS Windows 95 CD and Manual

Pentium II	**300MMX**	**$1809**
Pentium II	**333MMX**	**$1979**
Pentium II	**350MMX**	**$2079**
Pentium II	**400MMX**	**$2279**

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- Sound Blaster PCI Ensoniq Sound Card
- Grolier Encyclopedia 1998
- 320 Watt Hi-Fi Surround Sound Stereo Speakers
- ATX form factor Mid Tower Case (7 Bays & 230W UL PS)
- 56K v.90 Internal Fax/Modem w/Voice Mail and Speakerphone
- MS Windows 95 CD and Manual

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Pentium II 333MMX	**$1579**
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- 1.44MB Teac Floppy Drive
- 104 Key Windows 95 Keyboard and Mouse
- 32X EIDE CDROM Drive
- Sound Blaster PCI Ensoniq Sound Card
- Grolier Encyclopedia 1998
- 320 Watt Hi-Fi Surround Sound Stereo Speakers
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Pentium II 266MMX	**$1179**
Pentium II 300MMX	**$1249**
Pentium II 333MMX	**$1419**
Pentium II 350MMX	**$1519**

Pipeline Best Buy

- Intel Triton TX chipset or Pentium II 440LX chipset with AGP
- 32MB RAM with 512K Pipeline or Internal Built-in Cache
- 4.3GB Ultra DMA IDE Hard Drive
- Cirrus Logic 3D SVGA w/4MB SGRAM (PCI or AGP)
- 15" SVGA monitor .28mm, 1280x1024, Non-Interlaced.
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- 104 Keys Windows 95 Keyboard and Mouse
- 32X EIDE CDROM Drive
- 16 bit Sound Card
- Grolier Encyclopedia 1998
- 320 Watt Hi-Fi Surround Sound Stereo Speakers
- ATX form factor Mid Tower Case (7 Bays & 230W UL PS)
- 56K v.90 Internal Fax/Modem w/Voice Mail and Speakerphone
- MS Windows 95 CD and Manual

Pentium 233MMX	**$ 869**
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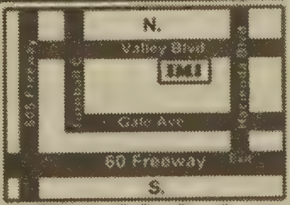

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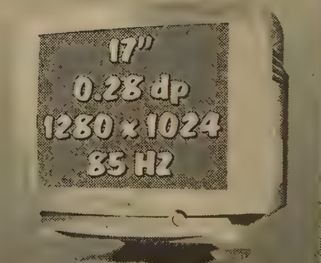

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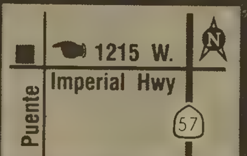

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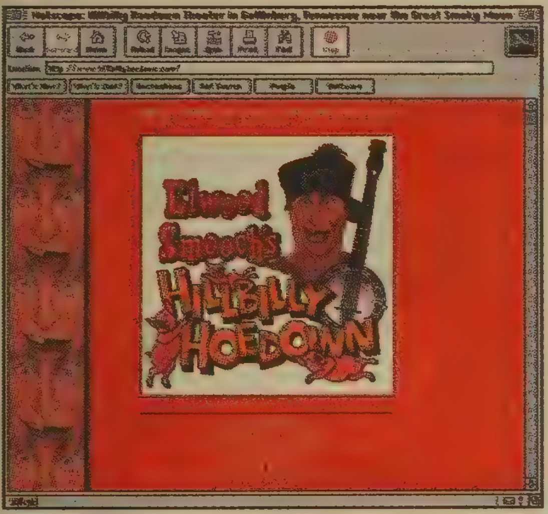

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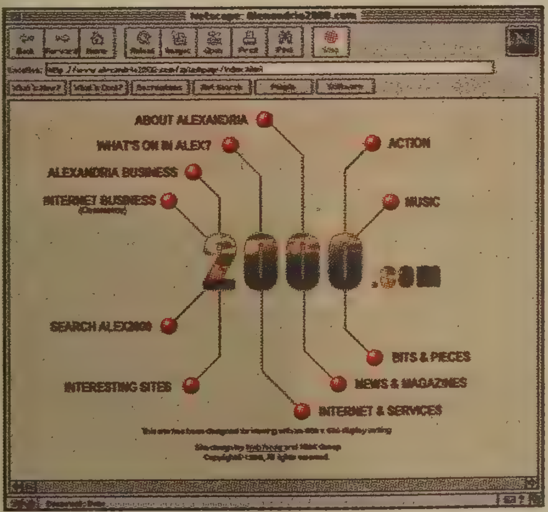

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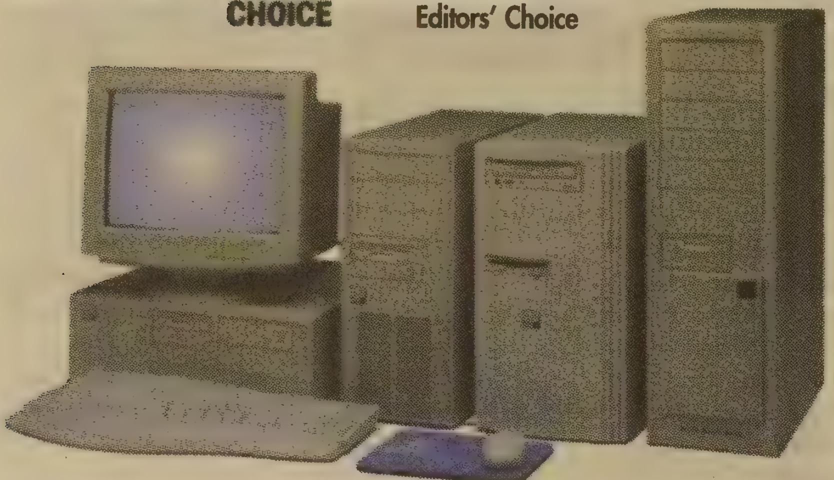

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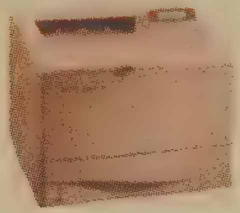

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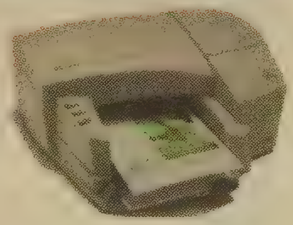

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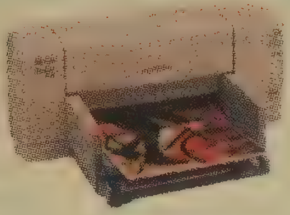

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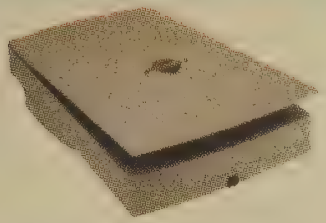

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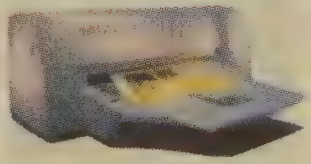

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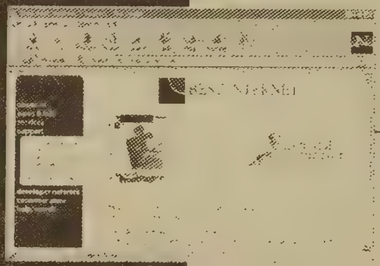

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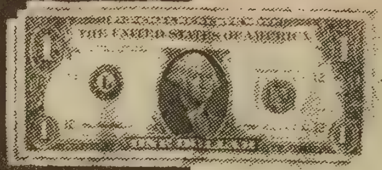

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Home Business Network *http://www.hbn.com/* Offering services, business opportunities, and advice for computer/mail order professionals and others working from their home. [Exp. #182.]

Internet Traffic Report *http://www.internettrafficreport.com* A Web site that tracks Internet traffic in real-time. [Exp. #182.]

IT Network *http://www.itnetwork.co.uk/* Internet TV and multimedia data storage information service. [Exp. #181.]

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Outta Site Web Design *http://www.drjack.com/outta_site* Creative Web page design and consultation. Large graphics and animation library. Great prices. [Exp. #180.]

SinaSearch *http://www.sinanet.com* The world's first complete Chinese/English search engine. [Exp. #181.]

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TagGen *http://www.hisoftware.com/taggen.htm* TagGen makes your Web site presentable to search engine Web crawlers by generating appropriate meta tags. [Exp. #180.]

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ZapMap *http://www.zapmap.com/index.html* Interactive, vector-based geographic hotspot directory of Web sites in Silicon Valley, written in Java. [Exp. #180.]

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Advanced Bearings And Belts *http://advancedbearing.com/* An international firm specializing in sales and service of industrial bearings, belts, pumps, compressors, and hoses. [Exp. #182.]

American Car Buying Service *http://209.50.96.85/home_rrk.html* Provides new auto pricing services over the Internet. [Exp. #181.]

Anne Schofield Jewelry Designs *http://home.earthlink.net/~asj/Index.html* Beautiful earrings assembled right here in California. Gold, silver, lightweight, affordable, plus a free newsletter. [Exp. #182.]

Art4Media *http://www.art4media.com* ART4MEDIA is a small team of Bay Area artists and marketing entrepreneurs dedicated to producing art for effective promotional collateral. We provide creative and production services for logo design, music packaging, and interactive media. [Exp. #180.]

Autowest Dodge In Fremont *http://www.teamautowest.com* [Exp. #180.]

Battery Doctor *http://www.batterydoctor.com* Reuse your old cell phone, laptop, or video camera Bi-Cad battery. [Exp. #182.]

Beverly Hills Premiere Tour Operator *http://www.bhpremiere.com* US inbound tour operator specialized in medical conventions. [Exp. #180.]

Business Cards *http://www.businesscards.com* Business cards from your computer to your door! [Exp. #182.]

By Names And Images *http://www.bynamesandimages.com/* Graphics, animation, scanning, business services, and more. [Exp. #182.]

Carded Merchandise *http://www.angelfire.com/in/OurHardware/index.html* Need computer hardware new at 90% off? We have anything and everything for you, and you are just going to have a heyday with this site; easy to order, too! [Exp. #180.]

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Court Reporting *http://www.deposerve.com/* Recording of depositions and court trials. [Exp. #182.]

Divers Discount Supply *http://www.diversdiscount.com* Online catalog for scuba gear sales. Diving information. [Exp. #180.]

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Menu Design & Analysis *http://www.menusforprofit.com* Designers of profitable menu programs for Restaurants. [Exp. #180.]

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US Digital Communications Inc. *http://www.usdi.net/* Digital communications. [Exp. #182.]

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Fidelity Capital *http://www.fidelitycapital.com/* Fidelity Capital is the new business development and venture capital arm of Fidelity Investments. [Exp. #182.]

HomeShark *http://www.homeshark.com/* The leading online mortgage and real estate services company. [Exp. #181.]

The Index Investor *http://www.indexinvestor.com* Asset allocation newsletter for index fund investors. [Exp. #180.]

IOA Re *http://www.ioare.com/* A full service reinsurance underwriting manager specializing in the Accident and Health reinsurance and insurance fields. [Exp. #182.]

Jeremiah K. Murphy, CPA *http://www.jkmcpa.com/* Helping businesses succeed for over 20 years. [Exp. #182.]

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Michael Gray, CPA *http://www.innetix.com/~mgraycpa* Visit our site for income tax planning ideas, including dealing with Incentive Stock Options and the Alternative Minimum Tax, and for small business improvement strategies. [Exp. #180.]

Rate.net *http://www.rate.net/* Mortgage, CD, auto, and credit card interest rates are ranked and compared daily for over 11,000 financial institutions at RateNet. [Exp. #182.]

Ronald J. Riley's Internet Pages *http://www.rjriley.com/* Investor resources. [Exp. #182.]

Security Pacific Real Estate Brokerage *http://www.alolvera.com* Specializes on properties for the investor, in Contra Costa and Alameda counties. [Exp. #182.]

Stern Financial Services *http://mpb.com/sfs/* Retirement planning for educators. SFS offers personalized services and products to meet your individual financial needs. [Exp. #180.]

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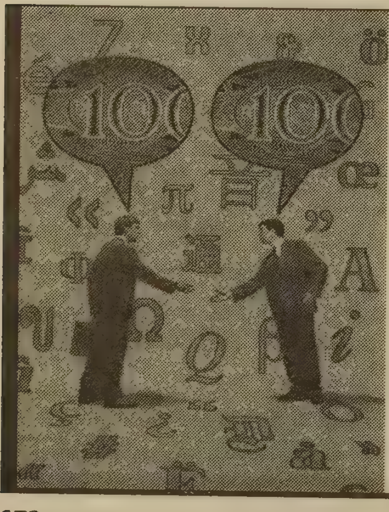

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Legal Services

Ask A Lawyer *http://www.ask-a-lawyer.com* [Exp. #180.]

NetCourt Web Site *http://www.interNetCourt.com* NetCourt is a leading provider of online trial and expert witness transcripts produced by court reporters from around the country. [Exp. #180.]

Richard J. Greenstone, Attorney at Law *http://www.rjg.com/* Copyright, trademark, licensing, business, and transactional law for the computer, entertainment, and publishing industries. [Exp. #181.]

Employment/ Education

Ascolta Training Co. *http://www.ascoltatraining.com* Authorized training for Cisco, Microsoft, and Netscape. Validated Internet/intranet fundamental course. Convenient Bay Area and So. Cal. locations. [Exp. #180.]

Benjamin Franklin Institute Of Global Education *http://www.bfranklin.edu* Dedicated to lifelong learning opportunities, whether through traditional school divisions (K–12, college, and university), or through on-the-job training. [Exp. #180.]

Berklee College Of Music *http://www.berklee.edu* [Exp. #180.]

California Contractors Exam Preparation School *http://www.contractorschool.com* [Exp. #180.]

ConsultLink *http://www.consultlink.com* Over 19,000 computer consultants contractors are represented in the ConsultLink Web site. [Exp. #180.]

Encyclopedia Britannica's Guide To Black History *http://blackhistory.eb.com* [Exp. #180.]

Fundamental Buddhism Explained *http://www.fundamentalbuddhism.com/* Explicit explanation of Buddhism, based on the Pali Canon, recognized by Buddhist scholars as the oldest surviving written record of what the Buddha actually said and taught. [Exp. #182.]

Graduate Ranking *http://www.usnews.com/usnews/edu/beyond/bcrank.htm* US News & World Reports graduate school ranking site. [Exp. #180.]

Historic American Productions Web Site *http://www.cyberramp.net/~hap/* Pioneer skills educational video series. [Exp. #182.]

HTML Spoken Here *http://www.geocities.com/~jimhanson* Free tutorial teaches you how to create your own Web page. [Exp. #180.]

Leslie H. Carter & Associates *http://members.aol.com/SU4MLK/index.html* Youth violence prevention and intervention programs designed to teach students social responsibility, citizenship, and skills to resolve interpersonal conflicts. See examples of curriculum. [Exp. #182.]

Martin Luther King Jr. Papers At Stanford *http://www.leland.stanford.edu/group/King* [Exp. #180.]

Mr. Brain Tutor *http://members.tripod.com/~russmccor/tutor.htm* Live teachers online: Tutoring in mathematics, English, computer programming, history, writing, etc. [Exp. #181.]

New Job Site *http://www.nethunter.net* [Exp. #181.]

Oak Tree Systems, Inc. *http://www.oaktree-systems.com* Software solutions for training centers. [Exp. #180.]

PC Pros Information Staffing *http://www.pcprosla.com* The computer employment experts. Technical graphics, digital new media, and administrative positions available. [Exp. #180.]

People Link's New World Village *http://www.people-link.com* People-Link, in partnership with Michael Albert, announces a new, progressive, online school, the Learning Online University. [Exp. #180.]

Teach Your Child To Swim With Aqua Tykes *http://www.aquatykes.com/* Teach your child to swim with ease and confidence! [Exp. #181.]

TEMP 24-7 *http://www.temp24-7.com* Dedicated to the weird world of temporary employment. [Exp. #180.]

Useful Links *http://www.yorku.ca/sts/links.html* A collection of pointers of interest to students and researchers in the field of science and technology studies [Exp. #180.]

Organizations

Afro-Americ@'s Black History Museum *http://www.afroam.org/history.html* [Exp. #180.]

Amnesty International *http://www.amnesty.org* Campaigns for fair trials, prisoners of conscience, and against torture, degrading or inhumane treatment. [Exp. #180.]

Arizona Environmental Health Association *http://www.aeha.org/* Non-profit association for the advancement of environmental health in Arizona. [Exp. #182.]

Condo Management Online *http://www.condomgmt.com/* The premier resource for community associations. [Exp. #181.]

Cult Awareness Resources, CARES *http://cares-cares.org* Provides information to the campus community about cult activity, including Interna-tional Churches of Christ information. [Exp. #180.]

Doctors Of The World *http://www.doctorsoftheworld.org* Dedicated to improving the health and relieving the suffering of vulnerable people throughout the world. [Exp. #180.]

Global Fund For Women *http://www.globalfundforwomen.org* A grant-making foundation that provides flexible, timely assistance to grassroots women's groups around the world. [Exp. #180.]

Golden Gate Computer Society *http://www.ggcs.org* Meetings on the 4th Monday each month at the San Rafael Community Center. [Exp. #182.]

Institution of Incorporated Engineers *http://www.iie.org.uk/iie* The UK's largest professional association in electronic, electrical, and mechanical engineering for incorporated engineers and engineering technicians. [Exp. #181.]

Jewish Scientist Network *http://www.jsn.org/jsnhome.html* An information server based on reader submission of articles, news, links, references, etc., all pertaining to Jewish issues relating to the sciences or scientific issues. [Exp. #180.]

KidsHealth Club *http://www.ama-assn.org/KHClub* The purpose of the American Medical Association's (AMA) new KidsHealth Club is to help parents raise healthy, happy children. [Exp. #182.]

Los Angeles Macintosh Group *http://www.lamg.org* Non-profit user group offers training programs, meetings, monthly magazine, employment, networking, and tech support. [Exp. #180.]

Main Street United Methodist Church *http://www.jfsi.com/msumc.htm* Kernersville, NC's friendliest and most vibrant Church. [Exp. #181.]

Master Of Light Institute *http://www.geocities.com/Hollywood/Studios/8378* Enlightenment through film making as preached by Revdonaldo. [Exp. #180.]

NAACP *http://www.naacp.org* [Exp. #180.]

National Center For Employee Ownership *http://www.nceo.org/* Articles, columns, discussions, and interactive training on employee stock ownership plans, stock options, etc. [Exp. #182.]

Neighbors For Responsible Logging *http://www.responsible-neighbors.org* A grassroots environmental group. [Exp. #182.]

NetAction *http://www.netaction.org/training* NetAction's Virtual Activist, a comprehensive training course on cyberactivism, is now on the Web. [Exp. #180.]

New 1998 NACA Web Site *http://www.naca.org/index.html* [Exp. #180.]

Nizkor *http://www.nizkor.org* Transcripts from the Nuremberg trials of convicted Nazi war criminals are now posted to the Web by Nizkor. [Exp. #180.]

NOCCC (North Orange County Computer Club) *http://www.noccc.org* Web page of computer user group. Meetings: 1st Sunday of the month, 9:00 am, Chapman University, 333 N. Glassell Ave., Orange. [Exp. #180.]

Performance Animation Society *http://www.PASociety.org* 3D character and performance animation/ motion capture SIG. [Exp. #181.]

Rainforest Foundation *http://www.charityprofile.co.uk/rainforestfoundation.html* Est. in 1989 by Sting and his wife, Trudie Styler, to help save the Brazilian rainforest. [Exp. #180.]

Santa Clarita Valley's PC Group *http://www.smartlink.net/~scvpcg* The Santa Clarita Valley's PC Group is dedicated to PC literacy. Come join us. [Exp. #180.]

SFAUG: San Francisco AutoCAD Users Group *http://www.sfaug.org* Meets 1st Monday each month, 6-8:30, usually at the SFSU Downtown Center at 425 Market St. [Exp. #180.]

Technical & User Groups Network *http://www.tugnet.org* 24-hour bulletin board, meeting calendar, membership info., articles, reviews. [Exp. #180.]

Warchild *http://www.warchild.org* Works to alleviate the suffering of children by bringing material aid into war zones. [Exp. #180.]

W.E.B. DuBois Institute *http://web-dubois.fas.harvard.edu* [Exp. #180.]

World Education Access *http://www.wea.net/* Non-profit organization offering scholarship opportunities for students in the US and around the world. [Exp. #180.]

Publications

Bad Subjects *http://eserver.org/bs/default.html* Semi-academic zine. [Exp. #180.]

Bayani Magazine *http://primaveradesign.com/bayani.html* An online magazine of Filipino arts and culture. [Exp. #180.]

Blithe House Quarterly *http://www.blithe.com/* BHQ features a diversity of new short stories by emerging and established gay, lesbian, and bisexual authors. [Exp. #180.]

Car Secrets *http://www.igs.net/carsecrets/info12.htm* An auto consumer's and owner's book for sale online with hundreds of cost saving tips. [Exp. #181.]

Classified Ad Collectible Photo Guide *http://www.nwgraphics.com/collectables* [Exp. #180.]

Cookbook Marketplace *http://www.pemcoltd.com/* Over 1,500 cookbook titles are indexed and available for review and purchase online. That is every title in print! [Exp. #182.]

dailylung.com *http://dailylung.com/* A magazine for Pulmonary Medicine physicians, patients with lung disease, and their families. [Exp. #182.]

Driving And Style *http://www.drivingandstyle.com/index.html* Online e-zine that includes information for auto enthusiasts. [Exp. #182.]

Echo Station *http://www.echostation.com/* Online magazine for Star Wars fans with the latest news, reviews, previews, and interviews from the Star Wars universe. [Exp. #182.]

Financing News *http://www.datamerge.com/financingnews/index.html* The Financing News Online Edition has been completely revamped with many new articles and a user friendly interface. [Exp. #182.]

Fragments Of A Lost Mind *http://www.enteract.com/~duh/index.htm* A great American novel. [Exp. #182.]

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Global Phone Book *http://www.PhoneNumbers.net* Offers a unique collection of phone, fax, and email directories worldwide. [Exp. #181.]

International Stock Newsletter *http://members.aol.com/mysteryco/international_stock_newsletter.htm* Undiscovered international stock investments with large potential. Objective financial information on innovative global companies. [Exp. #180.]

ModemHelp.com *http://www.modemhelp.com* ModemHelp is an infocenter type resource which offers a complete guide to modem-related information on the Web. [Exp. #181.]

Mollie Katzen: Cookbooks, Recipes For Vegetarians *http://www.molliekatzen.com* [Exp. #180.]

Netnoir *http://www.netnoir.com* [Exp. #180.]

Opamp Technical Books *http://www.opamp.com* Table of contents search. Computer, engineering, business, trade books. Over 20,000 titles. [Exp. #180.]

Russian Internet Broadcasting *http://www.ribcast.com* Russian newspapers are now available via Backweb push channels in Acrobat PDF format, including all graphics and Russian fonts. [Exp. #182.]

Saving Money Using The Internet *http://www.nwgraphics.com/internet* This is a booklet to show you how to save money on the Net. [Exp. #180.]

Soccer 365 *http://www.soccer365.com/* A free daily, fully personalized soccer newspaper. [Exp. #182.]

The Daily Star Online *http://dailystar.com.lb* Lebanese newspaper in English. [Exp. #180.]

Tips On How To Improve Your Golf Game *http://www.nwgraphics.com/golf* A booklet to show you how you can improve your golf game. [Exp. #182.]

U-Turn Monograph And E-zine *http://www.uturn.org/* An art journal. [Exp. #181.]

Odds & Ends

A Speculator's Diary *http://www.concentric.net/~L77280r/DIARYHDG.HTM* A Speculator's Diary is where the visitor is shown exactly how to earn money speculating. Nothing is left to the imagination. [Exp. #182.]

All About Pianos *http://www.tiac.net/users/pianos/index.htm* Everything you ever wanted to know about the piano! [Exp. #180.]

All-Dogs.com *http://www.all-dogs.com/* A comprehensive listing of dog professionals. [Exp. #182.]

American Needlepoint Art & Design Inc. *http://www.americanneedlepoint.com/* This site is dedicated to needlepoint, custom canvases, and accessories. [Exp. #181.]

Awareness Holistic Books And Information Center *http://www.jps.net/aware* Holistic health, books, info, gifts, and classes in San Mateo. [Exp. #180.]

Baby Center *http://www.babycenter.com* The Web's leading resource for new and expectant parents. [Exp. #182.]

Body Sculpture *http://www.geocities.com/eureka/8158/spectrum.html* Unique, all natural slimming lotion designed to eliminate "love handles" and "thunder thighs." [Exp. #180.]

California Electric And Magnetic Fields Program *http://www.dnai.com/~emf* EMF news, reference sources, and a complete program description. [Exp. #180.]

Eyegive *http://www.eyegive.com* The eyegive service offers individuals a simple, free opportunity to transform the way they support their favorite causes or charities into a daily, almost instantaneous activity. [Exp. #180.]

Final Solution Dog Training *http://www.dog-training.com/* Dog training obedience classes for puppies and adult dogs. [Exp. #182.]

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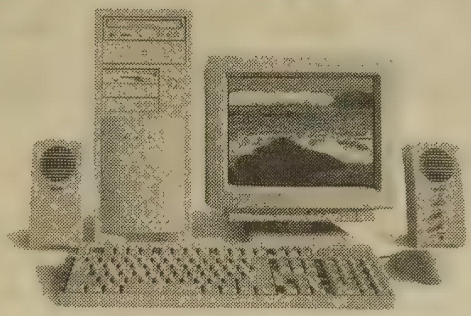

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Garden Escape *http://www.garden.com* Seasonal scentsations. [Exp. #180.]

interAntiques *http://interantiques.com/* International Web site about art, antiques, and antiquities. [Exp. #182.]

Knowledge Circles *http://www.highvib.org/knowcirc.htm* Tune-in the spiritual communities of the Aquarian Age. [Exp. #181.]

Merriam-Webster *http://www. m-w.com/dictionary.htm* Merriam-Webster's online, searchable WWWebster Dictionary. [Exp. #182.]

PETA *http://www.jesus-online.com* Hoping to make Christians the latest converts to vegetarianism. [Exp. #181.]

Professional Speakers On-line *http://www.prospeak.net/* A directory of professional speakers with video auditions. [Exp. #182.]

Trinity Web Sites *http://surf.to/trinity* Links to Christian Web sites, categorized for your convenience. [Exp. #180.]

Truckers Web Site *http://www.800-459-omni.com* Featuring a truckers chat room that lets drivers keep in touch with each other and family, and a forum where a driver can post a message that will be read by other drivers. [Exp. #182.]

Personal Home Pages

Adorable Toshiba Libretto *http://www.cerfnet.com/~adorable/libretto.html* The latest news, links, and information on the Toshiba Libretto, a 2 lb. mini-notebook. [Exp. #182.]

Best Freebies *http://www.BestFreebies.com* Features links to over 30,000 sites offering free things—compiled by a disabled vet. [Exp. #180.]

Felice Marra Web Site *http://www.tempolibero.com/malfer/* Agenda Internet: screen saver collection Italian style. [Exp. #180.]

Gadfly2's Home Page *http://www.hooked.net/~gadfly2/* [Exp. #181.]

GPF Avoidance *http://www.geocities.com/Athens/Aegean/4841/* Century cable gripes, Carl Sagan, Hodgkin's disease, hyperlinks, and more. [Exp. #181.]

Grandmother's Attic *http://www.wizard.com/~dancer/* Devoted primarily to Greyhounds and the adoption of the ex-racing Greyhound. [Exp. #180.]

Horace's Villa Web Site *http://www.humnet.ucla.edu/horaces-villa/* Devoted to the villa and villa poetry of the poet, Q. Horatius Flaccus (Horace). [Exp. #182.]

Jews Of Cuba *http://www.mindspring.com/~menorah* [Exp. #182.]

Khilafah/Caliphate Is The Way To Islam *http://home.att.net/~kgmowla* 1300 years old Khillafah/Caliphate is the only political system in Islam, and it must be re-established without further delay. [Exp. #181.]

Kittys On Flame With Rock And Roll *http://www.kittyfeet.com* Frisco art, rock music, QuickTime, fiction, and more. [Exp. #181.]

Lambrechtsen Online *http://www.knoware.nl/users/evim/index.html* History of a Dutch family, listing of all Dutch archives. [Exp. #180.]

Lee's Home Page *http://www.twow.com/leeg/* An eclectic site with a surfing theme. Links to surfing, surf conditions, weather, law, software, scuba diving, and Web resources. [Exp. #180.]

OmniGo Online *http://www.bayside.net/users/todo/ogo/* A user site for the HP OmniGo 100/120 community. [Exp. #180.]

Robotman *http://www.the-robotman.com* Educational and fun site. [Exp. #181.]

Travel In Indonesia *http://www.TroyDrake.com* Photos of travel in Indonesia. [Exp. #180.]

Government/ Politics

African-American Astronauts Recognized *http://observe.ivv.nasa.gov/nasa/ootw/1998/ootw_980211/ob98021.html* NASA's Observatorium honors the astronauts during Black History Month. [Exp. #180.]

Alberta (Canada) Strike Solidarity Page *http://www.geocities.com/CapitolHill/5202/cargill.html* Get updated labor news. Check out our campaign for anti-scab legislation. [Exp. #182.]

Bureau Economique en France *http://www.cotedivoire.co* Site officiel du Bureau Economique: Paris and Washington. [Exp. #180.]

Berkeley Citizens Action *http://www.jps.net/bca* The municipal electoral coalition that has organized Berkeley progressive politics for the last two decades. [Exp. #180.]

California Trade And Commerce Agency, Division Of Tourism *http://gocalif.ca.gov* [Exp. #180.]

City Of Citrus Heights *http://www.ci.citrus-heights.ca.us* [Exp. #180.]

Democracy Direct *http://www.marinternet.com/rknox/car15.html* Reclaiming democratic representative government by giving the national and state electorates a meaningful and direct voice (not the last word) in state and national government. [Exp. #181.]

Library Of Congress *http://www.loc.gov* [Exp. #180.]

Library Of Congress Information Bulletin *http://www.loc.gov/loc/lcib* [Exp. #180.]

May Day On the Web 1998 *http://www.accessweb.com/mayday/* Workers fight for human rights. [Exp. #181.]

Mumia Abu-Jamal Web Site *http://www.mumia.org* Learn more about Mumia Abu-Jamal, read the latest updates on his case. [Exp. #180.]

San Diego County Democratic Party *http://www.netgaincc.com/sddemocrats/* [Exp. #180.]

Nuclear Age Peace Foundation *http://www.wagingpeace.org/* Home of Abolition 2000. [Exp. #180.]

US Consumer Information *http://www.pueblo.gsa.gov* Find the latest information from more than forty US government agencies. [Exp. #180.]

Arts

American Photographer In Spain *http://www.geocities.com/Soho/Gallery/5718/feria.html* Images of The Spring Fair (La Feria) in Spain! [Exp. #181.]

Art-Smart *http://www.art-smart.com* An easy method for an artist or gallery to showcase their artwork in a fully searchable database of art on the Web. [Exp. #182.]

ArtsLink Australia *http://www.artslink.org.au/* Professional performing and entertainment site. [Exp. #181.]

Artuframe *http://www.artuframe.com/* The world's largest online art and framing gallery featuring discounted artworks, mats, framing services, and other art-related products. [Exp. #182.]

Cannonball Express *http://www.best.com/~canonbal* A video project-in-progress about urban firestorms, fire safety, and environmental issues. [Exp. #182.]

Filipino American Exposition *http://primaveradesign.com/faae.html* Shows this year's schedule of festival and other events. [Exp. #180.]

One Art World *http://www.oneartworld.com* A free Web-based art gallery exhibiting artworks by contemporary, distinguishing artists. [Exp. #181.]

PaintingsDirect.com *http://www.paintingsdirect. com/* A new way to find and buy paintings. [Exp. #181.]

Peter Findlay Gallery *http://www.findlay.com/* Art gallery. [Exp. #181.]

PhotoSphere Images *http://www.photosphere.com* PhotoSphere offers professional, royalty-free stock images, on CD-ROM and as downloadable single images. [Exp. #180.]

Ted Alvy Cosmos Topper Home Page *http://pages.prodigy.com/FNJD74A* Art of '60s L.A. underground radio, rebop, beatniks, hipsters, hippies, zoot horn rollo. [Exp. #182.]

Entertainment/ Leisure

Acura Club *http://www.acuraclub.com* [Exp. #180.]

AddictMUD *http://www.addict.dmswebworks.com* This is the official home page of AddictMUD. A great place for new and experienced mudders alike! [Exp. #180.]

The Adrian Empire *http://192.41.53.160/* A medieval recreation group, featuring live steel combat. Attain Knight-hood in three disciplines. [Exp. #180.]

Alex Fox, Flamenco Guitarist *http://www.alexfox.com/* Alex Fox has created his own unique style of music, combining classical guitar, flamenco, and pop. [Exp. #181.]

Alexandria Official Web Site *http://www.alexandria 2000.com/* [Exp. #182.]

Australian FanSite of Chubby Checker *http://www.ozemail.com.au/~facergchubby.htm* Chubby Checker, the biggest music Web site on the Internet. [Exp. #182.]

Bimbo Toolshed Web Site *http://jackattack.com/bimbotoolshed* Cyberhome for San Francisco's greatest punk band. [Exp. #180.]

The Blarney Stone *http://members.tripod.com/~iwolff/index-2.html* Award winning Irish Humorist offers samples of his columns, parodies, essays, and other laugh-out-loud observations. [Exp. #181.]

Bogota Colombia *http://www.bogotacolombia.com/* Todo sobre la capital de Colombia—The city, the enterprises, and the people of Bogota. [Exp. #181.]

Cashmere Heights Weddings *http://www.chc-weddings.co.nz* New Zealand's most exclusive wedding and honeymoon company. [Exp. #180.]

Chess The Fourth Dimension *http://chess4d.com/* Four-way, four-person chess game. [Exp. #182.]

Classical Music For Novices *http://www.angelfire.com/pa/noviceclassical* [Exp. #180.]

Creativemusic.com *http://www.creativemusic.com* Online sheet music store and so much more! [Exp. #182.]

Cypher *http://www.epgmedia.com/cypher* [Exp. #180.]

Dee Zaster, Esq. *http://members.tripod.com/~russmccor/* Guess who just entered the race for Governor of California? Don't miss DZ's campaign to drive Pete Wilson crazy and out of office. [Exp. #180.]

Dial-A-Joke *http://www.howdyneighbor.com/batteryman/ra.htm* The old recordings are back and on the Internet. Stuff recorded up to 20 years ago. [Exp. #181.]

Elvis In Concert *http://www.wydeo.ch/~ma_wyss/index4.htm/* [Exp. #180.]

Entertainers' Network *http://www.entertainers.net* Bringing a whole new concept to the world of booking an act for that special event. [Exp. #182.]

Explore Africa *http://www.exploreafrica.co.za* An umbrella Web site about Southern Africa. [Exp. #180.]

Exploration Network *http://www.exn.ca/* The Discovery Channel online. [Exp. #182.]

Explore Nova Scotia *http://explorens.rivendell.ns.ca/* One stop guide to exploring the Province of Nova Scotia, Canada. What to see, how to get there, where to stay, and things to do! [Exp. #180.]

Find A Joke *http://www.find-a-joke.com* A large collection of all kinds of jokes and other humor. [Exp. #181.]

Great American Duck Races *http://www.duckrace.com* The event involves racing rubber ducks down a local waterway. [Exp. #180.]

Hillbilly Hoedown *http://www.hillbillyhoedown.com/* The happiest show In the Smokies. [Exp. #181.]

Humor Monthly (Or Thereabouts) *http://www.masterm.com/humor.html* Monthly humor on relationships, computers, famous quotes, name changes, religion, and interesting facts. [Exp. #180.]

Jazz/Saxophone *http://www.jazzcorner.com/harper.html* Jazz musician's site contains soundbytes, photos, fan club info., purchase CDs, and more. [Exp. #182.]

KROQ 106.7 *http://www.cosmoslink.net/~kroq* This award-winning page is on "the world-famous KROQ 106.7 FM." Lists of DJs, events, and much more. [Exp. #180.]

KZ Mobile Entertainment Services *http://pw2.netcom.com/~lilalynn/KARAOKEZONE.html* KJs/DJs, vocal acts, photographer, etc.; Karaoke show listings and equipment distributor. [Exp. #182.]

Love Psychic Ariele *http://www.ariele.com/* 1-888-289-2681 Clairvoyant, phone readings, and love magic. [Exp. #181.]

Mark L. Falconer Film Page *http://members.aol.com/MFalc1/home.html* Reviews of currently released films and videos. Occasional commentary on the industry. [Exp. #180.]

Mercury *http://www.sleepinggiantstudios.com/mercury* Web site for the band Mercury. [Exp. #180.]

The Official Seinfeld Web Site *http://www.seinfeld.com* [Exp. #182.]

Online Hotel Reservations *http://www.chms.net/* [Exp. #182.]

Outdoor Adventure *http://www.kjaerulf.dk/* Everything for the outdoor adventure. [Exp. #182.]

PC GAMES Realm *http://www.geocities.com/~mechdig* The latest news, reviews, cheat codes, and much more from your favorite PC games. [Exp. #182.]

Proline Fishing Products *http://www.prolinefishing.com* Bass fishing lures. Fresh water, custom quality, for novice and professional anglers. [Exp. #181.]

Puro Tejano En Vivo *http://www.purotejano.com* Official Web site for Puro Tejano En Vivo television show. [Exp. #182.]

Res Rocket *http://www.res rocket.com* Live interactive music jamming on the Internet. [Exp. #180.]

Rosewood Music Publish-ing & Sales *http://www.rosewoodmusic.com* We publish and promote independent music artists and writers. [Exp. #180.]

Royal Crown Guest House *http://members.aol.com/jmain10478/royalcrown.html* Guest house. [Exp. #182.]

San Diego Regional Online Guide *http://www.sandiegolocal.com/* Covering events, theater, real estate, businesses, and communities in the Greater San Diego Area. [Exp. #182.]

San Francisco Brewed *http://members.xoom.com/sfbrewed* The finest unsigned and indie bands of the Bay Area! We're also RealAudio enhanced! [Exp. #181.]

San Jose's Technology Museum Of Innovation *http://www.thetech.org* [Exp. #182.]

Spirit Mall *http://www.spiritmall.com* A site designed for cheerleaders, dancers, mascots, and coaches. Find the latest products, services, and fun contests! [Exp. #182.]

Star Theatres Online *http://www.star-theatres.com/* Show times, movie information, and more. [Exp. #182.]

Star Trek Universe *http://www.uss-1701-e.com/* Covering all four shows with features that include a gallery, gossip, news, and more. [Exp. #181.]

SteppinStone Entertainment *http://www.steppinstone.com/* An independent film and TV company. [Exp. #180.]

Telery *http://www.telery.com/* A place to chat, play games, and have fun with your friends! Live chat, a casino, online games, free email and homepages! [Exp. #181.]

TexasCasino.com *http://www.TexasCasino.com* Experience the finest regulated online casino and sportsbook licensed to International Gaming Network (IGN). [Exp. #180.]

Ticketvision *http://ticketvision.com/* Online ticket service for premium seating to all events nationwide. [Exp. #182.]

Total Conversions *http://www.totalconversions.com/* Total conversions for all games like Duke Nukem 3D, Shadow Warrior, Blood, Quake, Quake 2, and many more. [Exp. #180.]

Tourette's Nirvana Page *http://www.geocities.com/heartland/pointe/8988/* [Exp. #181.]

Travel In Asia *http://www.ziegworld.org/* Pictures from countries around Asia. [Exp. #182.]

Travel With A Cause *http://www.miramed.com/* Travel in Russia, China, and Nepal. [Exp. #181.]

Underworld Software *http://www.uwgames.com/* Try a free demo of BloodBath and you could win $500! [Exp. #180.]

Unsound Records Home Page *http://www.unsound.com.au/index.html* New and used CDs, 12" vinyl/ Soul, reggae, hip-hop, oz, and soundtracks. [Exp. #180.]

Virtual Zone *http://www.mnet.fr/virtualz* Astuces and cheats for Playstation, Saturn, N64, PC. [Exp. #180.]

What's Cookin' With Chef Ron *http://www.chefron.com* Catering to the food industry and listeners around the country, includes the latest on outdoor news and tips. [Exp. #180.]

Willy Wonka Candy Factory *http://www.wonka.com* Wonka.com enables kids of all ages to navigate through the factory on the WONKAvator, accessing various rooms with in Wonkas wonderfully unusual factory. [Exp. #182.]

Zap Theatre *http://www.zap.dk/ofr.html* A place for the small theatres of the world. [Exp. #182.]

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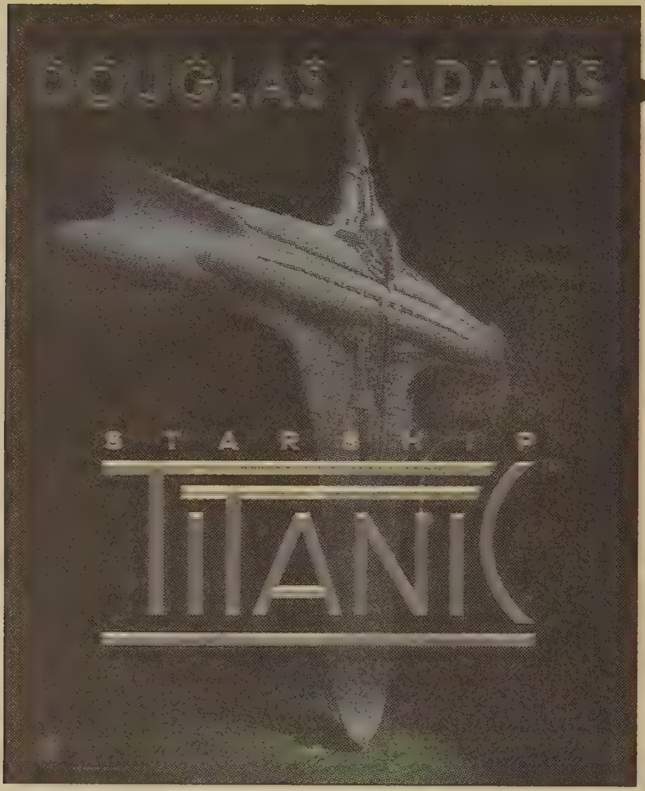
Product Announcements



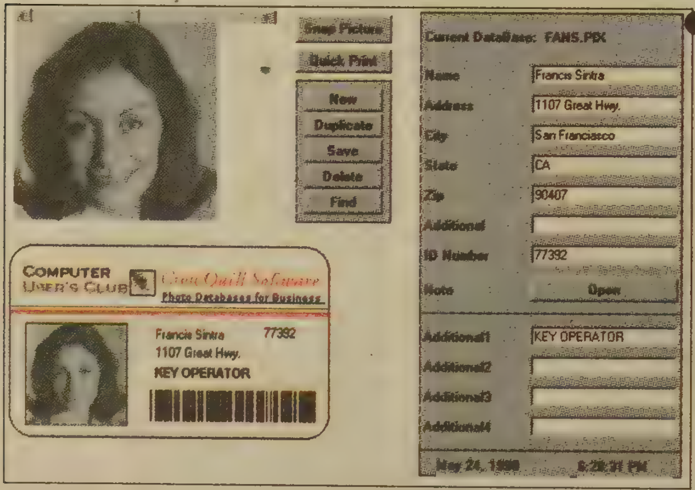
Windows Software

Douglas Adams' Starship Titanic

Douglas Adams' Starship Titanic, a three CD-ROM adventure game that features dynamic language processors (more than 14 hours of recorded dialogue and a library of more than 12,000 popular references) that are capable of facilitating conversations between the player and the game's characters. The ship offers elegant lounges, palatial vestibules, and first class staterooms located on more than 30 decks. It is inhabited by a crew of malfunctioning robots and a semi-deranged parrot. In order to progress, the player must secure the cooperation of the parrot and learn to communicate with the ship's cast of idiosyncratic "bots." The player's challenge is to solve a series of bizarre and surreal puzzles, correct the ship's central navigation system and return to Earth before the behavior of the parrot drives him or her crazy. ($49.95, Windows 95) Simon & Schuster Interactive. *www.ssinteractive.com* or *www.starshiptitanic.com* .

MasterPhotos Studio

MasterPhotos Studio offers four software packages in one: HotShots, Graphics File Converter, MasterPhotos 25, 000, and NetCard. The HotShots feature is a photo-editing utility which allows users to edit photographs to eliminate common problems like poor lighting and "red-eye". The Graphics File Converter feature enables users to convert images to the most popular file formats. MasterPhotos 25,000, includes thousands of high and low resolution images so users can quickly customize presentations, Web sites, and pre-formatted project templates. The NetCard gives users a way to jazz up their email communications. It's a tool for both the computer novice and the busy small office/home office professional. With an easy-to-use interface and features such as Digital Camera and Scanner Adjustment, it will allow any computer user to edit photos like a pro. ($39.95) IMSI, Corp., 1895 Francisco Blvd. E., San Rafael, CA 94901. 1-800-883-8082. *www.imsisoft.com* .



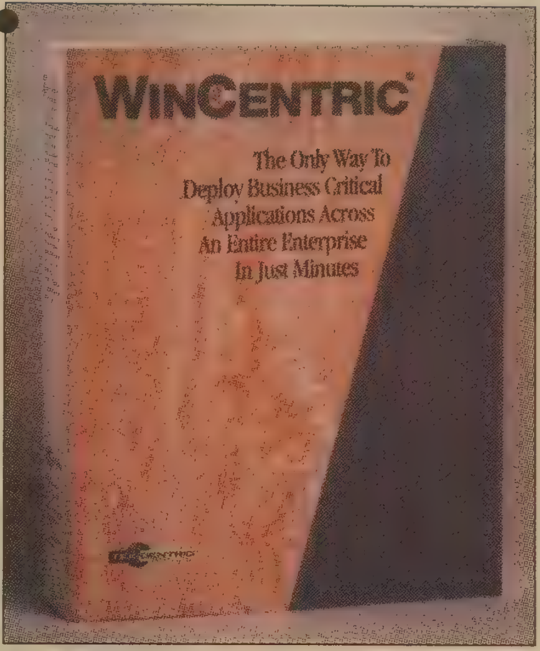
Current Database: FANS.PIX
Name Francis Sintra
Address 1107 Great Hwy.
City San Francisco
State CA
Zip 90407
Additional
ID Number 77392
Note
Additional1 KEY OPERATOR
Additional2
Additional3
Additional4

ID•pix

ID•pix is a flexible, photo identification database that lets you issue color or black-and-white photo identification employee and member cards instantly. Small businesses and individuals who have a need for security and identification, or digital photo data records will also find many ways to use this software. It lets you create multiple, relational databases that store digitized photos and text. ID•pix is completely customizable, and will configure cards or album pages that range in size from standard credit card size up to full 8" x 11" pages. The package also includes a label maker, bar code 3 of 9, Postnet zip codes for mailings, and 100 blank ID cards. The program comes with a wide selection of templates you can use as is or modify, or you can design your own on WYSIWYG screens with drag-and-drop ease. ($99) CrowQuill Software, Inc., 1407 Gretel Ln., Mountain View, CA (650)964-5272, *cqstudios@aol.com* .

WinCentric Enterprise

WinCentric Enterprise, the first in a series of new products from TekCentric targeted toward the enterprise computing market, is a thin client application deployment add-on to off-the-shelf Windows NT Server 4.0. With WinCentric, all business critical applications can be moved from the desktop PC to your server without modification. By centralizing business critical applications, more people throughout the enterprise will have access to these applications, while increasing security and lowering administration costs. Utilizing TekCentric's Remote Presentation Protocol (RPP), WinCentric allows for seamless integration into client desktops—allowing remote application Windows to appear on the client desktop as true local Windows. Users running Windows NT, 95, 3.11, DOS, and browsers will have access to business critical applications over Internets, intranets, and extranets. ($1,995 for a 5-user license with additional 5-user licenses available for $895) TekCentric Corp., 155 P. Moffett Park Dr., Sunnyvale, CA 94089. (408)752-8100. *www.tekcentric.com* .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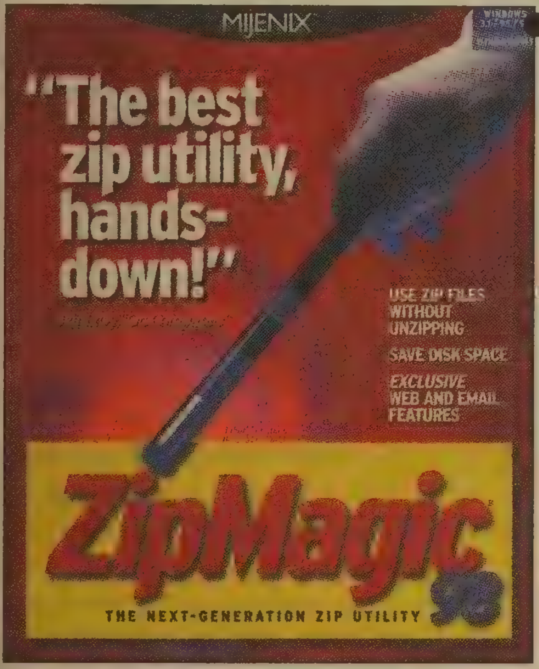
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Spell Catcher For Windows

Spell Catcher includes a spell checker, thesaurus, and shorthand glossary. It works with any text-based application including word processors, note pad, email, Web browsers, and contact managers. It customizes all your text programs at once, eliminating the need for different applications. It features easy access from the task bar anytime and anywhere to check selected text or to choose thesaurus lookup. Interactive spell checking follows you while you type and automatically corrects errors. Batch spell checking will check an entire document for errors, then paste in all the corrections at once. ($39.95) Casady & Greene, Inc., 22734 Portola Dr., Salinas, CA 93908. (408)484-9928. *www.casidyg.com* .

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Updates

Brøderbund Software, Inc. announced **Kid Pix Studio Deluxe**, an art CD-ROM for kids. It encourages children to unleash their imaginations and exercise their creative and artistic skills. ($29.99, both Windows and Mac versions) Brøderbund Software, Inc., 1-800-521-6263. *www.broderbund.com* .

Cinovation, Inc. have released **Scriptware for Mac 1.0**. Until now, this word-processing software was only for PCs. This software automatically formats and paginates scripts to odd and exacting rules that Hollywood demands. Cinovation, Inc., 1-800-788-7090. *www.scriptware.com* .

Dantz Development Corp., introduced the release of **Retrospect Express** that is optimized for backup to removable media including Zip, Jaz, SyQuest, MO, and CD-R/RW drives. ($49.95) A retail version will be available in July. Dantz Development, 1-800-225.4880. *www.dantz.com* .

Development Corp., announced the availability of version 1.4 of the Retrospect 4.0 Driver Update. The free update adds support for more than twenty new backup mechanisms to Retrospect 4.0. The update is available at *www.dantz.com/upgrades_and_updates.html* .

LANovation released **PictureTaker version 1.5** that lets Corporations achieve the goal of eliminating Windows downtime. Two new features include "search" and "un-distribute." (Enterprise Edition starts at $450 for 10 workstations) LANovation, 1-800-747-4487. *www.lanovation.com* .

Lasergraphics presented **WinRascol 4**, software that was developed for digital film recorders and includes exclusive Power Smoothing Technology that corrects the color banding problems in PowerPoint 97. It is both Windows 95/98 and NT 4.0/5.0 compatible. ($395) Lasergraphics, 1-800-727-2655. *www.lasergraphics.com* .

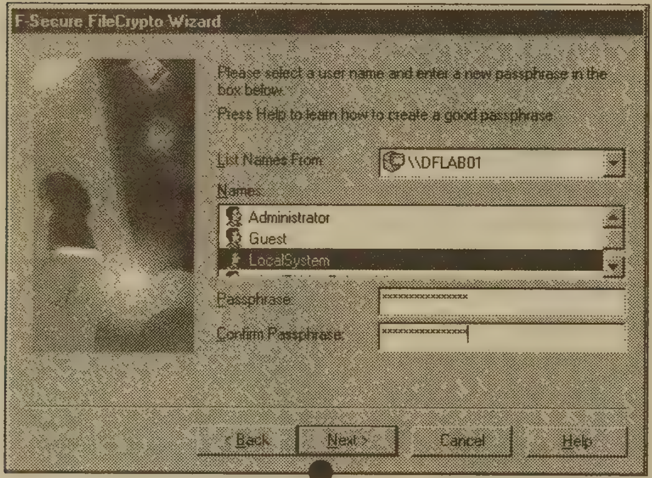
Maximizer Technologies Inc. introduced **Maximizer Enterprise**, an enterprise computing solution that contains all the features of the Maximizer 97 contact manager, plus a fully-integrated Opportunity Management System and Group Security features. ($249.95) Maximizer Technologies Inc., (604)601-8025. *imt@maximizer.com* .

Network Instruments, LLC unveiled **Observer 5.0**. This protocol analyzer enables system administrators to perform network troubleshooting without incurring high costs that would typically be associated with vendors. ($695) Network Instruments, LLC., (612)932-9899. *www.networkinstruments.com* .

Seattle Lab shipped **SLmail version 3.0**, a new generation mail server designed for the all-new Microsoft architecture. (A free two-week trial period; it may be downloaded from *www.seattlelab.com*)

Premier Clip Art 10,000

Premier Clip Art 10,000 helps you create eye-catching and appealing documents that are only limited by the boundaries of your imagination. As the name implies, this CD-ROM offers 10,000 high-quality, color images in 80 popular and useful categories. From fun to functional, categories include cartoons, people, flowers, holidays, business, and sports. You can easily drag-and-drop images into your favorite word processor, paint, draw, or desktop publishing program. All images are in Windows VMF (vector) format. It also comes with a trial copy of Thumbs+ 3.20, an image editing tool that allows you to browse through the various image libraries in the program. You can re-size, crop, sharpen, rotate, mirror, filter, and add other touches to the images without sacrificing quality. ($14.95) Expert Software, Inc., 800 Douglas Rd., N. Tower, Ste. 600, Coral Gables, FL 33134. (305)567-9990. *www.expertsoftware.com* .



Please select a user name and enter a new passphrase in the box below.

Press Help to learn how to create a good passphrase

List Names From: \\DFLAB01

Passphrase: xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx

Confirm Passphrase: xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx

F-Secure FileCrypto

F-Secure FileCrypto provides strong, on-the-fly encryption for confidential data in Microsoft Windows 95/98 and NT 4.0 environments. For security you can use either the three-key 3DES algorithm with 168-bit encryption key or Blowfish algorithm with 256-key encryption key. F-Secure FileCrypto is centrally installed over the network and automatically encrypts all open and temporary files. It offers a self-extracting email attachment feature which allows you to send encrypted email to any other user. It is also managed centrally, letting the administrator define a security policy effective to all installed copies of the software. An Administrative Key Recovery feature allows for safe and easy management of situations where an authorized user who forgets the password can still gain access to the encrypted files. (Pricing begins at $99 per license) Data Fellows, Inc., 675 N. First St., 8th Fl., San Jose, CA 95112. (408)938-6700. *www.DataFellows.com* .

SysTrack

SysTrack provides resource billing, real-time and historical diagnostics, application load analysis, and user tracking for Windows NT Terminal Server Edition and Citrix WinFrame. It is made up of three primary components. A data collection agent is loaded on each Windows NT-based server to be monitored. Each data collection agent stores data records into the second component, an ODBC-compliant database. SysTrack supports most popular desktop and client/server database packages. The third component reads and analyzes data from the database, providing easy-to-use reports and graphs to the end user. ($1495 per monitored server) Lakeside Software, Inc., 1327 Grinnell Ave., Waterford, MI 48328. 1-800-969-7717. *www.LakesideSoftware.com* .

Red Hat Linux 5.1

Linux is a cooperatively developed POSIX-based system that can be used as a UNIX workstation for applications ranging from Internet servers to reliable workgroup computing. Red Hat Linux 5.1 is a powerful update that includes enhanced installation features, as well as system configuring, Web caching, window management, and an added value CD of applications for Linux. With the internalization of 5.1, users can choose between many languages during the installation. Back buttons have been fully implemented during installation to allow users to correct mistakes along the way. SMB has been reimplemented to allow installations from Microsoft-based servers. Red Hat Linux 5.1 comes with three CDs, including the software application disk and Installation Manual. Red Hat Software offers 90 days of support. ($49.95) Red Hat Software, Inc., PO. Box 13588, 79 TW Alexander Dr., 4201 Research Commons, Ste. 100, Research Triangle Park, NC 27709. 1-888-RED-HAT1, (919)547-0012. *www.redhat.com* .

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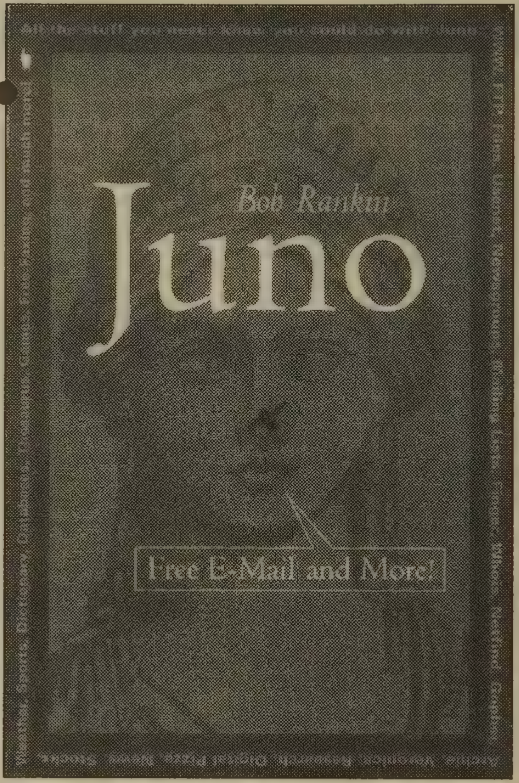
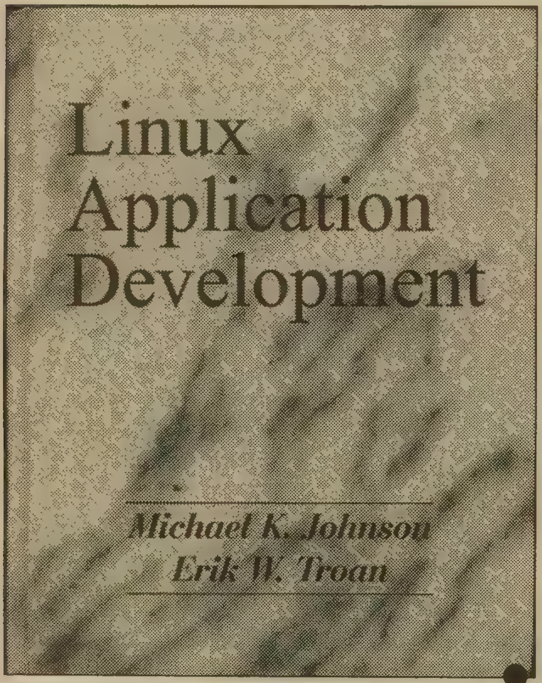
Books

Juno: Free E-Mail And More

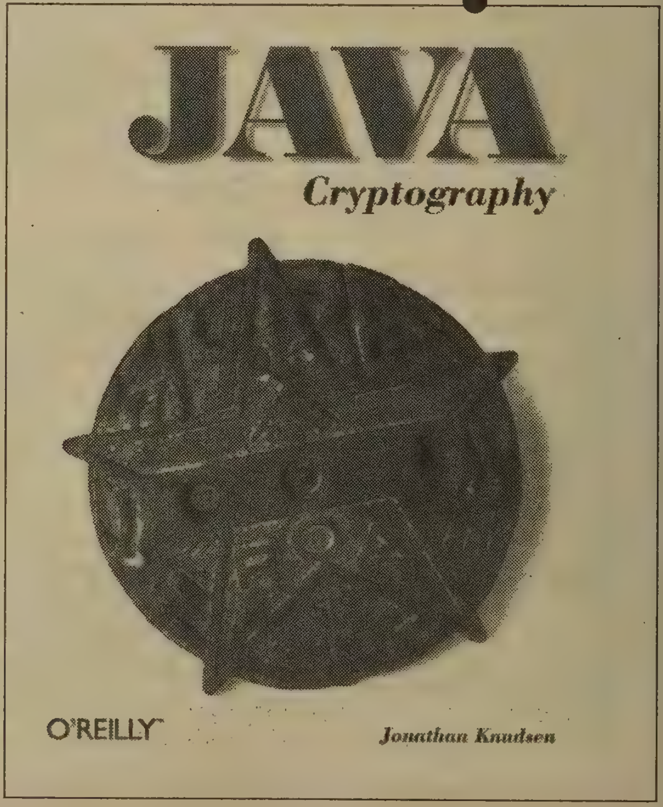
Juno, a free, advertiser-supported email service, already has over 4 million users, but it doesn't come with instructions (and technical support costs $1.95 per minute). Author Bob Rankin shows Juno users the basics on how to use Juno to access the Internet's many resources by email. He delivers detailed hints and tricks that both novice and experienced Juno users will use to get the most out of their free Juno account. Readers learn: how to use Juno to send, receive, reply to, forward, and delete messages, and manage mail folders; to maximize Juno's potential with advanced (and undocumented) features; how to troubleshoot problems that may occur; the finer points of netiquette, spam, and email privacy; simple email commands to access almost anything on the Internet (the World Wide Web, FTP libraries, USENET newsgroups, and search engines); and how to find and subscribe to Internet mailing lists. ($14.95) No Starch Press, 1-800-420-7240. *www.nostarch.com* .





Java Cryptography

This book teaches you how to write secure programs using Java's cryptographic tools. It includes thorough discussions of the java.security package and the Java Cryptography Extensions (JCE), showing you how to use security providers and even implement your own provider. It discusses authentication, key management, public private key encryption, and includes a secure talk application that encrypts all data sent over the network. No prior knowledge of cryptography is assumed. The book is peppered with useful examples, ranging from simple demonstrations to full applications. ($29.95) O'Reilly & Associates, Inc., 101 Morris St., Sebastopol, CA 95472. 1-800-998-9938. *www.ora.com* .



Linux Application Development

Linux Application Development is a practical reference guide for programmers developing Linux applications or porting applications from other platforms. Linux is fundamentally similar to UNIX—therefore much of the book covers ground familiar to UNIX programmers—but this book consistently addresses topics from a Linux point of view. The aim throughout is to provide the detailed information you need to take full advantage of Linux. Written by two Linux developers—Michael Johnson and Erik Troan—the book takes full advantage of their experience. The book will appeal to programmers across different levels of experience. It will help the proficient UNIX programmer make a transition to Linux. It will help a C programmer who doesn't know UNIX or Linux, by providing many examples for a solid introduction. And it will help experienced Linux programmers tackle advanced and otherwise confusing topics. ($45.95) Addison Wesley Longman, *www.awl.com/cseng/titles/0-201-30821-5* . (781)944-3700.

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Viewsonic E641 14" .28	$158
Viewsonic 15GA 15" .27	$295
Viewsonic E771 17" .27	$345
Viewsonic G771 17" .27	$387
Viewsonic GS771 17" .27	$399
Viewsonic G773 17" .26	$412
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Ensonic 32-Bit PCI	$18
ESS 1868 16-Bit PnP	$10

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Intel Atlanta 440LX	$156
Intel Atlanta 440LX w/Audio	$168
Intel Dakota Dual 440LX	$450
Intel Seattle w/PCI Audio BX	$240
DFI 440LX	$108
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Shuttle 440LX P-II	$98
Shuttle Triton TX 512 (MMX)	$69
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Mitsumi 2 x 8 CDR (Retail) IDE	$265
Sony 2 x 8 CDR (Retail) IDE	$285
Sony 2 x 6 CDR SCSI	$305

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Creative 20X (Retail) CT 6612	$130
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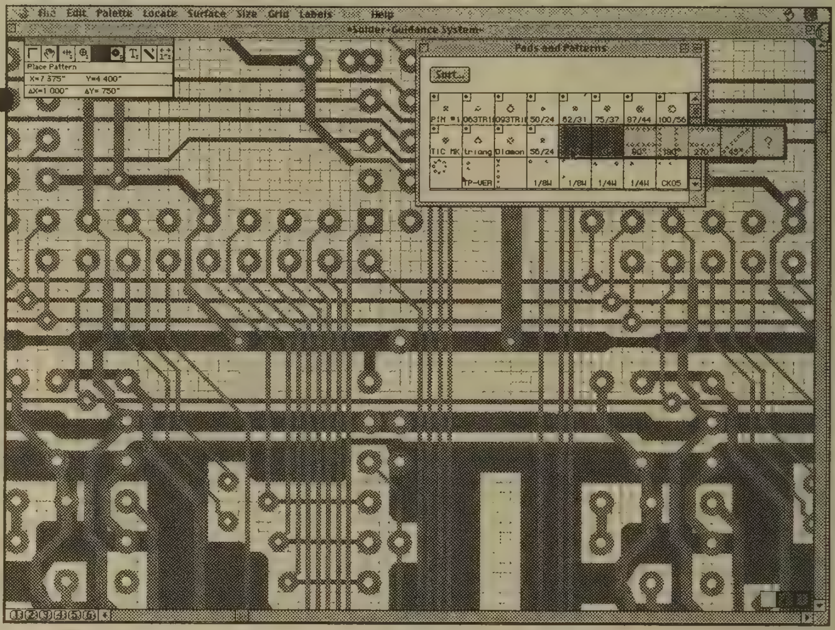
Macintosh Software

Layout Freeware



Layout Freeware is the freeware version of Douglas CAD/CAM Professional Layout program for the Mac OS. It is designed to give users quality, free software that they can use to produce circuit boards at reasonable costs. It allows you to design Printed Circuit Boards in a 32" x 32" working area with a database resolution of 0.001" and it accommodates a wide variety of grids, pads, holes, and traces, all user definable. With fifty-two different view scales, you can examine the entire layout or concentrate on details areas of any size. For SMT applications, both component side and solder side SMT footprint libraries can be downloaded from the Douglas Web site. Layout Freeware can also be used to design sheetmetal parts, such as enclosures or front panels for the designer's PCBs. If you choose to use Douglas's production facilities, your boards will be produced directly from your design file (no translation to Gerber files required). Layout Freeware requires System 6.0.8 or later and is downloadable from *www.douglas.com/software/freeware/index.html* . Douglas Electronics, Inc., 2777 Alvarado St., San Leandro, CA 94577. (510)483-8770.

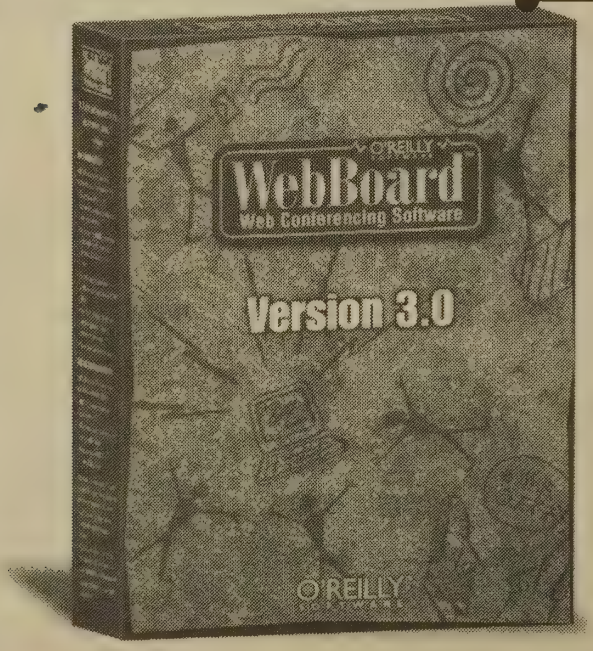
Xcluder

Xcluder, an XTension for QuarkXPress, works with Helios EtherShare OPI to dramatically reduce the time it takes to print large Postscript files. OPI speeds printing using low-resolution files for page composition that are swapped to corresponding hi-res files during proof and file printing to film or plate. Printing can be done even faster with EtherShare OPI using the "omit tiff & eps" switch found in the QuarkXPress dialog box. However, this option is seldom used because real world pages rarely contain only low-res raster data. The Xcluder XTension addresses this problem. It recognizes EtherShare OPI low-res images and, during printing, only sends the necessary header information in the image that OPI needs to swap in the hi-res images. Xcluder requires PowerPC or 68K Mac OS running System 7.0 or higher; QuarkXPress 3.31 or higher; with Helios EtherShare OPI 1.2 or 2.0. (10 user license, $5,950 with a 10 user add-on for $2,950) AXPA Electronics AB. *www.axpa.se* . US distributor: Helios Software, 269 Mt. Hermon Rd., Ste. 100, Scotts Valley, CA 95066. (408)461-6061.

Web Software

HP Web PrintSmart 1.0

This new software allows people with Internet access to print customized newspapers, reports, and other information found on the Web. HP Web PrintSmart can scan Web sites, search for keywords, and automatically format, and print the results. All documents can be printed complete with table of contents, page numbering, and customizing font styling. It offers keyword searches that work like a clipping service. For instance, someone writing the latest news on a particular company can set Web PrintSmart to visit Web sites periodically and print desired information. Web PrintSmart works with all HP LaserJet and DeskJet printers, runs on a 486DX processor or better (Pentium recommended), running Windows 95 or NT with 5MB hard disk space. It is available free to download from the HP Web site: *www.hp.com/go/webprintsmart* . Hewlett-Packard Co., *www.hp.com/* .

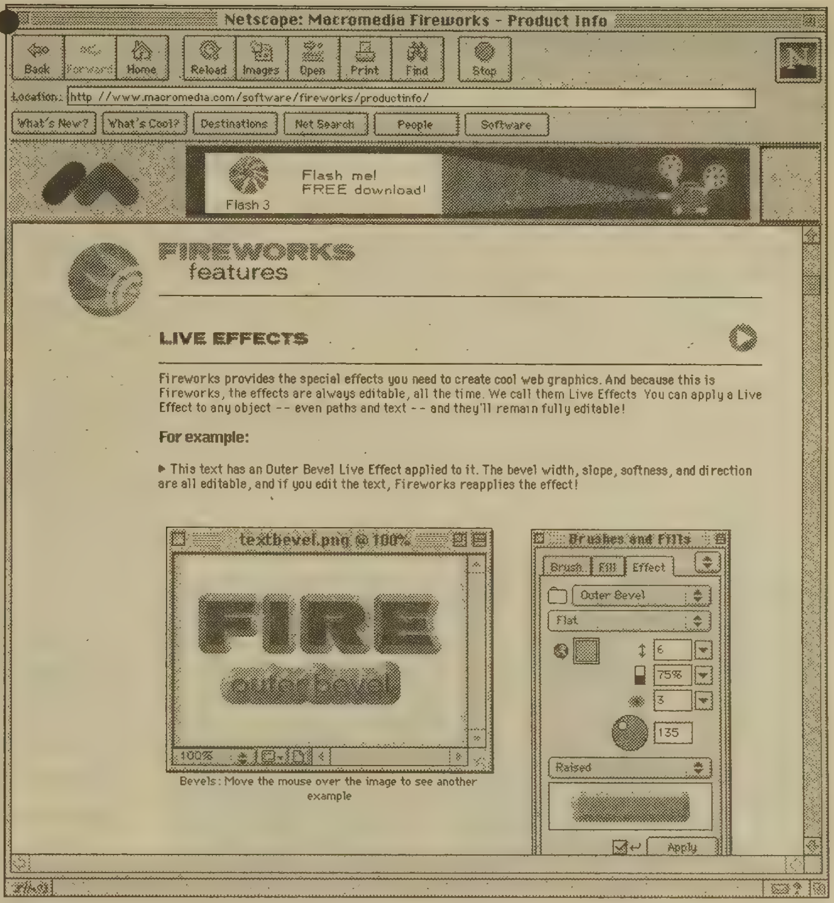


WebBoard 3.0

WebBoard 3.0 is the enterprise version of O'Reilly & Associates live chat and multi-threaded conferencing system. It includes WebMaster, Inc.'s Conference Room Professional, a robust IRC server that lets you host up to 1,000 simultaneous users. You can host forums using Microsoft SQL 6.5, a scaleable, high-performance, relational database. WebBoard 3.0's new log file feature records browser visits on a per-board basis, making it easy for administrators to analyze WebBoard traffic with most third-party products. With WebBoard's browser-based remote administrator, a system administrator can manage the boards, conferences, and users across the Internet or on an intranet. A built-in SMTP server lets users participate in conferences off-line via email. Also included is a copy of *Conferencing with WebBoard* by Susan Peck and Jay York. ($699, with upgrade pricing available for enrolled users of WebBoard version 2.0. It runs on Windows NT and 95, and includes its own internal Web server.) O'Reilly & Associates, Inc., 101 Morris St., Sebastopol, CA 95472. 1-800-998-9938. *www.ora.com* .

Fireworks

Fireworks provides a unified environment for creating, optimizing, and producing high-quality bitmapped graphics for the Web on Windows 95/NT and Power Macintosh systems. It features precise text controls, a rich set of vector tools, and a robust bitmap editing environment. All objects and effects in Fireworks are editable all the time. A slicing feature allows users to break up images for faster downloads, and a button generation feature dramatically simplifies creation of interactive Web pages by generating up, down, over, and hit states for buttons, plus JavaScript code. A completely open solution, Fireworks imports and optimizes images from standard graphics applications such as Photoshop, FreeHand, Illustrator, and CorelDraw. ($299; available through Macromedia at *www.macromall.com* . A free, thirty-day trial version can be downloaded from *www.getfireworks.com*) Macromedia, Inc., 1-800-457-1774. *www.macromedia.com* .



http //www.macromedia.com/software/fireworks/productinfo/

FIREWORKS features

LIVE EFFECTS

Fireworks provides the special effects you need to create cool web graphics. And because this is Fireworks, the effects are always editable, all the time. We call them Live Effects You can apply a Live Effect to any object -- even paths and text -- and they'll remain fully editable!

For example:

▸ This text has an Outer Bevel Live Effect applied to it. The bevel width, slope, softness, and direction are all editable, and if you edit the text, Fireworks reapplies the effect!

Outer Bevel
Flat
6
75%
3
135
Raised

Bevels: Move the mouse over the image to see another example

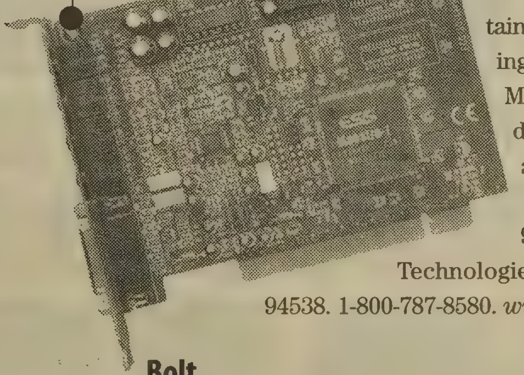
Macintosh Peripheral

PenPartner

PenPartner is a 4" x 5" active area tablet with a pressure-sensitive drawing and erasing UltraPen from Wacom. The UltraPen features a tapered design with an overall wider body that narrows near the tip for a more comfortable, positive fingertip grasp. The batteryless and cordless pen can be turned over to use the same pressure-sensitive feature work for erasure. The harder you rub, the more you erase. A side switch on the pen's barrel can be set to a double click, a key stroke, or other options. PenPartner has a single-screen control panel with user options that include customizing the amount of pressure needed to draw or erase. Five levels of drawing and erasing tip feel are provided. The PenPartner/Mac Academic system comes bundled with MetaCreations' Art Dabbler, which has pressure-sensitive tools that emulate traditional artists materials such as pastels, oils, and water colors. Art Dabbler provides step-by-step lessons on how to draw, paint, and animate with pressure-sensitive tools. ($109.95) Wacom Technology Corp., 1311 SE Cardinal Ct., Vancouver, Canada. 1-800-922-6613. *www.wacom.com* .

PC Hardware

SoundVision Awesome PCI Sound Card

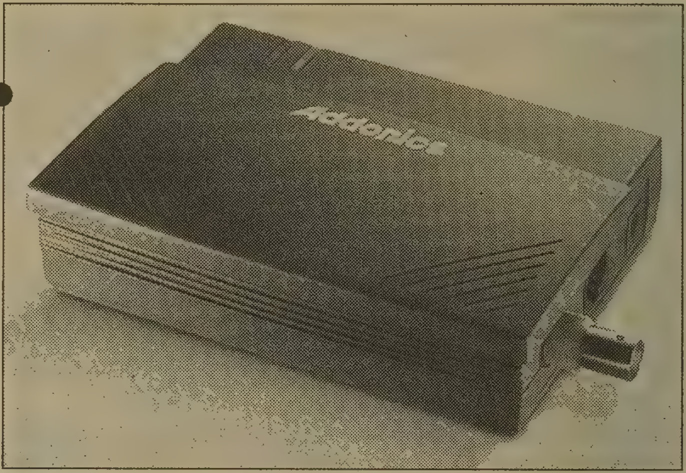


This is a 64-voice hardware wavetable PCI sound card with a 32-bit PCI bus master system interface. The PCI board supports DirectSound mode, A3D mode, and 39 positional audio. Special effects include reverb, chorus, flange, echo, and 39 spatial enhancement. It comes with a CD that contains the driver software and utilities, including: Mixman's 3-Mix, a music creation utility; Midisoft's Studio LE, a complete MIDI studio; Multimedia Doctor-MPC Smart Guide; as well as a music library. It includes software drivers for DOS, OS/2, Windows 3.1, 95, and NT. ($49.99) Addonics Technologies, Inc., 48434 Milmont Dr., Fremont, CA 94538. 1-800-787-8580. *www.addonics.com* .

Bolt

Aiwa's Bolt, a new 10GB cartridge drive, is based on well understood Travan tape technologies but uses a new recording format. It uses an ATAPI (EIDE) bus interface, rather than a floppy interface, and does not require an additional card slot. All of its electronics are included in the 1" high system. Data transfer rates occur at 5.33Mbps. Bolt is compatible with Travan TR-3 cartridges in both 750' and 1200' lengths. 6.6GB can be stored on a 750' cartridge; 10GB with a 1200' tape, with 2:1 data compression. ($149, internal; $179, external) Aiwa America, Inc., Computer Systems Division, 16969 Von Karman Ave., Ste. 260, Irvine, CA 82612. 1-800-920-2673. *www.aiwa.com/csd* .

Networking Hardware



WebShuttle

WebShuttle is an Internet sharing device for Ethernet networks that allows multiple users to simultaneously connect to the Internet over one phone line, with one external modem, using a single Internet account. It can support up to 50 users and will connect to any 10Base-T or 10Base-T Ethernet network—with no loss of speed. WebShuttle is simple to install and can be easily configured through its Web browser set-up screens. In addition, it has a built-in DHCP Server that assigns an IP address automatically to every network user. There is also built-in firewall protection and supervisor management features with password protected configuration settings to ensure network security. Operating system support includes Windows 3.1, 95, NT, and Windows 98. It is also compatible with other operating systems such as Mac OS and Solaris when connected to an Ethernet network. ($199) Addonics Technologies, 48434 Milmont Dr., Fremont, CA 94538. 1-800-787-8580. *www.addonics.com* .

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The dual speed Ethernet Network starter kit is a plug-and-play, off-the-shelf solution for SOHO environments. It provides easy installation and configuration for Windows 95/98 as well as support for a wide variety of Network Operating Systems. The kit includes a 4-port 10/100MB switch selectable Ethernet Hub, two 32-bit bus mastering 10/100MB Ethernet adapter cards, driver software, two 20' UTP cables, one power adapter, two installation guides, and shareware versions of Blizzard Entertainment's WarCraft II and Diablo. ($159) D-Link, Inc., 53 Discovery, Irvine, CA 92618. 1-800-326-1688. *www.dlink.com* .

continued on page 196

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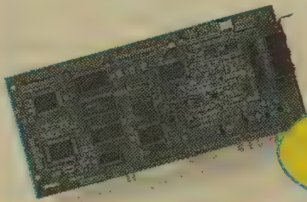

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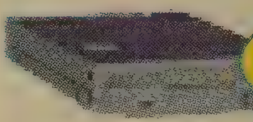

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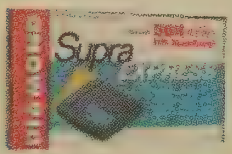

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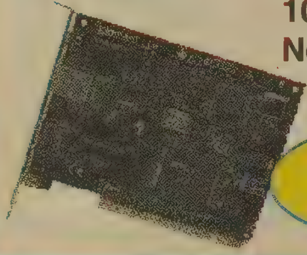

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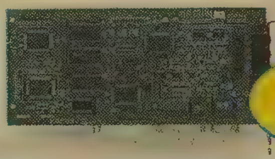

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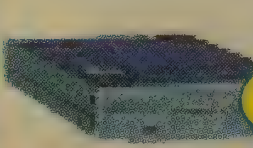

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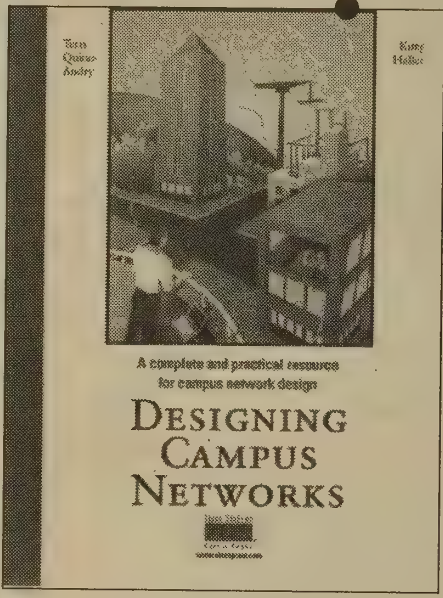
continued from page 192

Product Reviews

Book Review

Designing Campus Networks

Published By: Cisco Press
List Price: $55
Review By: Matthew Leeds


A complete and practical resource for campus network design
DESIGNING CAMPUS NETWORKS

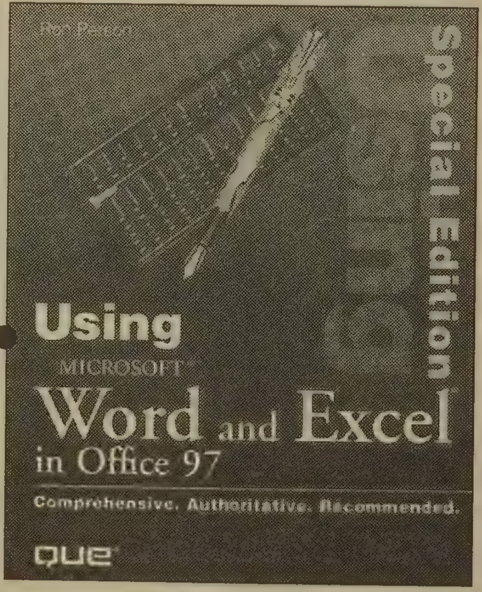
Network design is an art as well as a science. Designing large networks requires many skills, both in addressing the physical infrastructure needed to support cabling, wiring closets, equipment racks, power (including backup power systems), security, fire suppression, and in the technical aspects of network protocols and addressing, router and switch placement, server placement, and traffic design. Gaining an appreciation for the complexity that makes up a complete design, as well as being able to provide some level of meaningful input and/or oversight into the process is often a challenge for some management layers. *Designing Campus Networks* from Cisco Press provides a simple and limited (from the perspective of technical complexity) introduction to some of the technical issues in designing large networks.

This introduction is provided in three parts. The first discusses the types and patterns of network traffic that exist and why they must be managed. A little detail is provided at the technical level, sufficient to hint at the larger issues that lay behind this topic. The second part adds into the mix the issues of redundancy and security. The final part proposes three generic network designs of increasing complexity and scale.

A few comments, or cautions, with respect to this book. First, some elements of the discussion have a clear bent towards Cisco technology, in both the protocols discussed and the heavy use of routers (The definition of a Layer 3 switch in the book is suspect). Second, no guidance is provided on methodologies for measuring and monitoring traffic on a network, or for evaluating the potential load on a network. Nor is any real consideration given to infrastructure issues. You'll need more than this book to design a network, or to evaluate someone else's.

Using Microsoft Word and Excel in Office 97, Second Edition

Published By: Que
List Price: $39.99
Review By: Matthew Leeds



There is an enormous market in books that tell you how to get more out of a software program than you can manage to with just the documentation that comes in the original box. This has occurred as software publishers move from printed documentation to the euphemistic "on-line help", since that is often so abridged that it only hints at the method for achieving the result you're looking for. Additionally, in most business settings, the company you work for (if they care about saving money) will have obtained a bulk license of one type or another, and you'll never see an original manual.

Que has a good line of books that target various levels of expertise across all of Microsoft's product line. This particular book is aimed at the intermediate and moderately advanced user of the latest version of Word and Excel contained in Office 97. It weighs in at over 1,200 pages, and suffers from some of the usual problems found in books of that size. You can't get the book to lay flat unless you're in the middle of the book, or you bring weights home from the gym. Given the how-to nature of much of the material in the book, I've never understood why publishers scrimp on the binding and don't design books to lay flat regardless of your place within them.

With respect to the contents, I was able to find guidance on just about any subject I could reasonably come up with. I'm sure that if you've hit a wall in using Word or Excel that this book could provide assistance. A quick trip to the bookstore reveals a bookshelf with several feet of books in the same category. I've no idea if this book is better or worse than the rest. It certainly meets my needs, and I expect it would do the same for you. (Que, a division of Macmillan Publishing, 201 W. 103rd St., Indianapolis, IN 84290. *www.mpc.com* .

Windows Software Review

Windows 98

Published By: Microsoft
Review By: Woody Liswood

Is Windows 98 the major upgrade you have been waiting for? Unless you plan to upgrade immediately because you always have the latest-and-greatest, here are some of the things about the new OS you might want to consider before rushing out to be first in line.

Windows 98 does includes support for things that Windows 95 doesn't. First, is the FAT32 file system plus a utility to convert from the old FAT16. (Late last year, Microsoft included this in its Win 95 OSR2 (OEM System Release 2) upgrade for new and emerging hardware, but the majority of users probably do not have this.) Next, if you do have a new computer with USB (Universal Serial Bus) ports, Windows 98 recognizes these devices.

Other new features in Windows 98 include support for Windows TV, but this probably is not currently important for everybody and still requires an additional TV tuner board. Support for DVD drives is built-in. However, since DVD "standards" are still in turmoil, it may be better to wait until the industry settles on a single standard. Windows 98 also supports SCSI devices and lets you view multiple displays.

Windows 98 also adds an Online Services Folder with links to AOL, AT&T,

CompuServe, and Prodigy. But since most existing users probably already have an Internet Service Provider, they won't need this folder taking up space real estate on their hard drive.

In general, other than these additions, Windows 98 is largely a maintenance release for Windows 95. There are many little improvements in a multitude of areas.

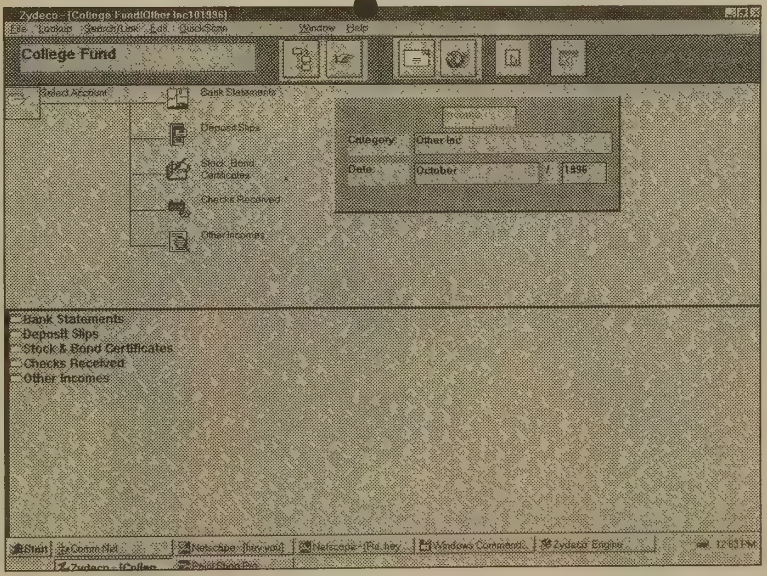
For instance, Windows 98 is supposed to be more stable than Windows 95, although I never really had this problem with Windows 95. Windows 98 has updated drivers—most of them you can download on Microsoft's Web site. Shutting down the computer is noticeably fast. And yes, Internet Explorer is more tightly integrated with the system, but you can download IE 4.1 and your desktop will look like Windows 98.

Microsoft has added an update site for Windows 98. Great stuff, but not much different from technology that OIL CHANGE has had for years.

My recommendation: the FAT32 file system is a strong reason to upgrade. Likewise, if your Windows 95 system has problems, Windows 98 should fix things. If you have USB-based hardware, you need Windows 98 to get it to work correctly. Other than that, the upgrade is worth while, but not immediately necessary. (Microsoft Corp. *www.microsoft.com*)

Zydeco for Quicken and TurboTax v 4.1.1

Published By: Zydeco Software
List Price: $29.95
Review By: David A. Simon, CPA



Category: Other Inc
Date: October / 1996

Zydeco is a document scanning and retrieval system for use with Intuit's Quicken and TurboTax for Windows. With Zydeco, you scan paper documents, such as invoices and receipts, and then link the scanned image to your Quicken or TurboTax data entry screens.

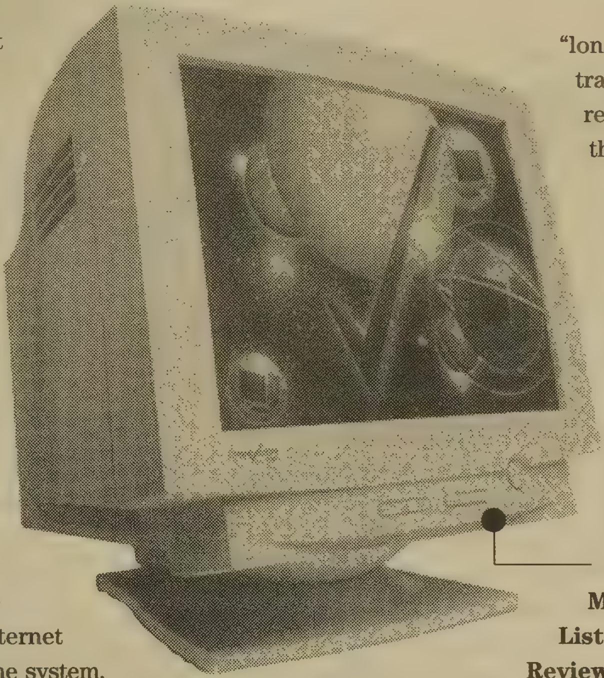
Once a document has been scanned, a link icon is created. By clicking on the icon, documents can be accessed quickly, and annotated with electronic "sticky notes."

The software is designed to assist Quicken and TurboTax users to organize and retain their tax records electronically. For example, you can scan your charge card slip from a business lunch, and then link the image to your "meals and entertainment" account. Then, you can attach an electronic sticky note to the image describing who you had the lunch with, and the business purpose of the lunch.

The program also takes advantage of a new IRS procedures (Rev. Proc. 98-25), which offers guidance on the requirements for keeping electronic tax records. The procedure describes the requirements for keeping electronic documents, and requires taxpayers to retain the records, for as "long as their contents may become material to the administration of the internal revenue laws." Of course, electronic records are much less bulky, and more convenient to store than hard copy.

Zydeco additionally allows the user to send linked documents as faxes or via email. The program is simple to use and intuitive, consistent with its intended customer—Quicken users with their personal tax records. It will also work with QuickBooks, Intuit's low-end accounting package for small businesses. (Zydeco Software, 1600 Canal St., 14th Fl., New Orleans, LA 70112. 504/539-9300. *www.itssoftware.com*)

Monitor Review



CyberVision C70 Monitor

Manufactured By: CyberVision
List Price: $399 (suggested street price: $349)
Review By: Mary Eisenhart

CyberVision bills the 17" multiscan C70 as "the ultimate high-performance monitor for advanced business and SOHO users." Within this niche, it offers excellent value.

While it's marketed primarily to the system integrator for Windows PCs, I've been using the monitor on Macs, both an ancient Quadra and a middle-aged PowerMac 7200, using the adapter CyberVision supplies on request. It supports resolutions up to 1280 x 1024 on the Wintel platforms; on the Mac, 1024 x 768 is the maximum available resolution.

At 640 x 480, the monitor produces razor-sharp images and is easy on the eyes for a full day's work of word processing, spreadsheets, email, net-surfing, etc. A particular boon with this monitor is its flat screen with anti-glare surface—when we moved to our new office with its lovely sunny windows, the inescapable reflections on the screens made the daily work load a physical struggle. The C70 blessedly fails to reflect the brightest sunlight and provides a remarkably paper-like surface. In addition, it generates sufficient brightness to be usable in a sunny room.

At 1024 x 768 the onscreen image is just slightly fuzzy on the PowerMac. For this reason, I wouldn't recommend it to a graphic artist, but neither does CyberVision. (There are no user-configurable focus controls to address this problem, though other controls—horizontal, vertical, contrast, brightness, trapezoid, pincushion, etc.—are easily adjusted from a pop-up menu activated by buttons conveniently located at the front of the monitor.)

The C70 is EPA Energy Star compliant and Plug and Play compatible on the Windows 95 platform (It's easy to set up on the Mac, too, with clear instructions for appropriate DIP switch settings on the adapter). It comes with a 3-year parts/2-year labor warranty and is backed by CyberVision's 48-hour Priority Replacement program. (CyberVision, 438 Cheryl Ln., Walnut, CA 91789. 909/869-7790, *www.cybervisiondisplays.com*) ◆

DEC's Bytes Of Art

InterNetworked Digital Experiences

By Tony Reveaux

Bytes of Art was a decentralized installation that required the audience to travel from site to site for the full experience.

Walk-in "cells" located in three Bay Area cities, provide an interactive facility for the networked multimedia "Bytes of Art."

The Internet has connected people, resources, and experiences like nothing before, as digital information of all kinds can be transmuted and transmitted over it with democratic transparency. Art and entertainment are only beginning to find the forms and structures here for reaching new audiences through new media.

Bytes of Art was a recent collaboration achieved between an artist and a business. It explored and manifested a unique rich congruity of the Internet as community, articulating the primal modes of digital art and open public access. Three walk-in "cell" interconnected installations in different locations in the San Francisco Bay Area provided a celebratory, interactive facility for networked multimedia.

In San Jose, in the columned sound cell, visitors selected a music category or artist and changed tempo, volume, flange, and reverberation with their own heartbeat via a heart monitor, and by walking on floor sensors. In Oakland, the visual cell allowed visitors to manipulate live camera input and images of artists' photos and designs to colorize, posterize and flip them, all by activating the sensors. In San Francisco, the richly decorated literature cell spoke to the "pace" of the Victorian age; visitors changed the story with fonts and the shading and kerning of words by stepping on any or all of the nine sensors.

On the Bytes of Art Web site, you can find QuickTime movies showing the active interactions available for each of the cells.

The cells were networked over the phone lines. Activating floor sensors in one cell in one city changed the order of the sensors in the other cells. Between 9 and 27 variations per cell were possible. Each cell was powered by a Digital Personal Workstation 600au with 4GB of disk space, a 24-plane PowerStorm graphics card, and Digital UNIX. WRL researchers wrote special application software to power online interaction for the entire exhibit. The cells were assembled with off-the-shelf electronic and mechanical components.

Artist-In-Residence-In-Cyberspace

As Digital Equipment Corporation's first Artist-in-Residence, Barbara Lee comes heavily credentialed as a veteran multimedian. With degrees from the California College of Arts & Crafts (Highest Distinction Film/Video/Performance B.F.A.) and Platt College (Honor Graduate Graphic Design & Desktop Publishing), she has mastered most of the tools of digital design and has presented several intermedia and Internet creations. Lee designed and fabricated all three cells.

Project leader Annie Warren has been with Digital's Western Research Lab since 1992. "I wanted to build an interface that moved away from keyboards, mice, and windows—an interface that could be built into the environment, not the desktop." Her special interest is in user interfaces within intelligent rooms—"This simultaneous interaction among people, virtual people and the interconnected cells will be used by Digital to research ways in which people will interact with computers in the future.”

Talking Digital

The Bytes of Art project started with the team going to the Internet, both because it was a medium of visibility and communication, and to cast the largest net possible for concepts, ideas, and talent.

Digital hired a temp to search the Internet, state-by-state, for all online arts organizations, arts publications, art event listings, and University art departments. After looking at the URLs, they sent each site a “Call For Entry” notice.

Explains Lee: “In each notice I briefly explained the project to the Web site administrator and included an HTML DOC and GIF for posting the ‘call notice’ to their Web site. The administrator would edit our doc to meet their needs and email me when their link was created so we could create a mutual link to them.”

Of the 1500 notices sent out, 10%, or approximately 150 responses, were received. The responses were divided into three categories: completely confused, intrigued, and totally supportive. Two people thought the “Call for Entries” was some sort of spam.

The Internet participation gained momentum after Lee's appearance on the Art & Technology Online Interview in December 1997. Approximately 15 of the 60 selected online artists found the project from the A & T interview LINK. “Some organizations became more involved than others did,” says Lee, “and we became a community working together to promote the Bytes of Art project.”

The jury consisted of Lee, as the artist, and a Digital systems administrator. First, the submission had to function without error messages. Second, it needed to be compatible with Digital's Western Research Lab (WRL) software interface. (For example, HTML, HyperCard, and Javascript were not compatible.) Third, it needed to be artistically interesting, either on its own merits or from within the cell of that discipline.

> **The Bytes of Art team had to give up the live Net-cast of visitors performing at each gallery. Legally it would have required the curators to collect a signed waiver from each participant prior to entering a cell, so it simply wasn't practical.**

“By allowing for expectations experienced in past projects,” Lee continues, “I began to control the aesthetics of this one. I feel this control flattens difference in the collaborations, as well as the medium. I prefer to heighten difference between artworks while maintaining a cohesive spatial envelope so I deliberately had no expectations. I must say that I was very pleased with the final results from the online submissions.”

Collaborating with Digital's team of technicians at WRL, they contributed several innovations to Lee's initial concept. “First,” she says, “WRL allowed me to explore the concept of the Internet as archive over

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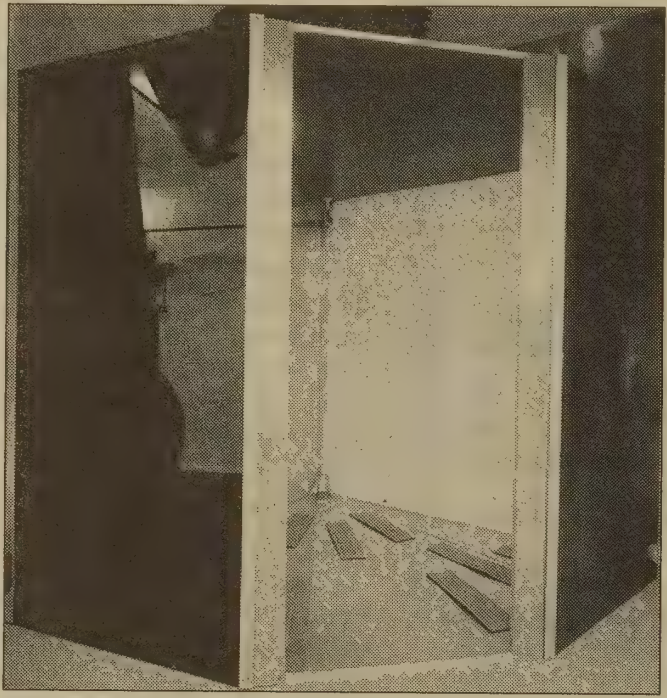
time. In the 'Call for Entries' process from November 1997 through March 1998, artists were encouraged to submit as many artworks as they desired, because storage wasn't a problem. Submissions varied per artist from 1 to 148. The average sound file submission was 15 minutes in duration.


Visual Cell, Oakland

"Second, WRL created the UNIX software for my sensor interface concept, which connects the events in each cell and the events happening between cells via the network."

MAX software for Macintosh computers is the only product on the market that partially enables sensor interface events, but it is limited to sound and light manipulations. MAX could not be used to direct the Visual cell image interface or Literature cell text manipulations, while the UNIX software WRL created can run on various platforms.

As in every ground-breaking endeavor, there are always some tropes and events that the creators would have liked to see implemented in the installations, but had to forgo because of cost, complexity or operational reliability. The Bytes of Art team had to give up some of the Internet interactivity they had initially envisioned, mainly the live Net-cast of visitors performing at each gallery. Legally it would have required the curators to collect a signed waiver from each participant prior to entering a cell, so it simply wasn't practical.

Interactive Sites and Sounds

"The site selection process was first influenced by geographical location," says Lee. "I wanted the gallery audience to reenact the data gathering ritual inherent to the Internet. When you do a 'search' on 'cats' from an Internet search engine like Digital's AltaVista Web site, you might receive a list of 35,012,874 Web sites for your review, but in actuality you'll probably only visit three or four.

"Bytes of Art was a decentralized installation that required the audience to travel from site to site for the full experience. The second influence was the site in relation to Internet technology and contemporary online art."

Hosting the Sound cell, the ART TECH: Silicon Valley Institute of Art & Technology in San Jose positions itself as a Tech-Mecca for Bay Area Artists creating tech-artworks. For the Literature cell, the Vorpal Gallery in San Francisco is a 34-year-old traditional fine art commercial gallery with a modest Internet site and no online art. The Visual cell was installed at the Center for the Visual Arts (CVA), a community gallery in Oakland where local emerging artists can exhibit their artwork and which has no Internet site.

"In terms of performances, some visitor reactions exceeded my expectations, but those have been by children. Most kids eagerly embrace discovery and they lack the self-consciousness of the adults. Their performances often push the envelope and I find that very exciting.

"Some visitors do understand what the cells were all about, and some don't. Most visitors don't think understanding the art is as important as experiencing it. I tend to agree. Ultimately you either have resonance with a piece of art or you don't." But she wouldn't change any of the interface parameters in form and function now that the show has been up.

Asked what would be her next "dream" project that would explore art and technology as Bytes of Art did, Lee replies: "The process of my work breaks the technology out of the traditional mouse-keyboard-monitor paradigm via the creation of faux architectures. My residency with Digital has allowed me to connect the faux architectures. My next dream project will allow me to access commercial real estate. I'm ready to embed Internet technologies directly into the primary box (from which we live and work) to form disorienting spatial connections."

Plumbing The Internet

Whether your job is pushing data through pipes, or you are a user who feels like you are being flushed down another kind of pipe, Peter Rybaczyk's *Internet Plumbing Handbook* (Novell-IDG, $34.99) will illuminate your online pathways. Through comprehensive and detailed overviews, clear explanations and cogent diagrams and illustrations, this handbook will help you unplug your pings and Roto-Rooter your routers. It is designed to identify components, protocols and connections, describe their characteristics, and offer suggestions for troubleshooting and solving problems.

We all use search engines on the Internet, usually with little more thought than as when we dial a phone, just scratching the surface of a powerful information tool. Digital's AltaVista, with access to the largest Web index in the world, and with more than 100 million pages, is one of the most preferred and referred-to engines on the Net. *The AltaVista Search Revolution*, Second Edition (Osborne/ McGraw-Hill, $24.99) by Eric and Deborah Ray provides complete coverage of AltaVista's new content, tools, and services. It can be well worth your time to go through their step-by-step search examples and peruse their tips to get where you're going faster and better. ◆

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Resources:

Digital Equipment Corporation
Western Research Laboratory
250 University Ave.
Palo Alto, CA 94301
http://bytes-of-art.research.digital.com
www.digital.com

ART-TECH
89 South First St.
San Jose, CA 95113
(408)971-9100
www.art-tech.org

Center for Visual Art
713 Washington St.
Oakland, CA 94607
(510)451-6300

Vorpal Gallery
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(425)397-9200
www.sfstation.com/galleries/vorpal.htm

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Calendar Of Events

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Kids Summer Computer Camp

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June 20–21

Computer Fair

Fairplex Expo Center, Pomona

Produced by National Productions, Inc. for over fourteen years, Computer Fair covers 100,000 square feet with over 300 exhibits featuring multimedia systems, notebook computers, software titles, modems, and other peripherals at discount pricing. Free prize giveaways every hour. Open 10–5 pm, admission is $6. For more information, call 1-800-800-5600, *CMPlist@aol.com* , or *www.lacomputerfair.com* .

October 29–31

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Primary Site: New Orleans, LA, USA

Secondary Site: Victoria, B. C., Canada

Technology-using teachers and educators directly involved in integrating technology into the K–12 classroom are strongly encouraged to attend Tel•Ed '98. For the third consecutive year, ISTE's Tel•Ed Conference will feature an international component, with a secondary conference held simultaneously in Victoria, British Columbia, Canada. The conference theme of "Telecommunications and All That Jazz" will play out in multi-site projects, more than 100 discussion sessions, dozens of hands-on ISTE workshops, and local student-focused events. Making plans and budgeting before summer vacation arrives is the best way for educators to guarantee their participation in this must-attend conference event. Information about online registration, the Tel•Ed '98 mailing list and updated lodging and rate information are availble at *www.iste.org* . 1-800-2806218 or (541)346-3537 (International).

Conferences, Shows, Special Events

June

June 14 Computer Fair. Sequoia Conference Center, Buena Park. National Productions. Contact: 1-800-800-5600, *CMPlist@aol.com* , or *www.lacomputerfair.com* .

June 14 MarketPro Computer Show & Sales. Antelope Valley Fairgrounds, Lancaster. MarketPro Shows. Contact: 1-800-708-7555, or *http://marketpro.com* .

June 15–18 WEB.X-New York. NY. Miller Freeman, Inc. Contact: *www.webdotx.com* .

June 16–18 PC Expo In New York. NY. Miller Freeman Group. Contact: 1-800-829-3976, or *www.pcexpo.com* .

June 16–18 The AS/400 Strategies Conference. Chicago, IL. DCI. Contact: (978)470-3880, or *www.dci.com* .

June 19–20 ITCC '98. Hyatt Regency, Reston, VA. TRI Group, Inc. Contact: *www.itccexpo.com* .

June 20–21 Computer Fair. Fairplex Expo Center, Pomona. National Productions. Contact: 1-800-800-5600, *CMPlist@aol.com* , or *www.lacomputerfair.com* .

June 21 MarketPro Computer Show & Sales. Community Center, Oxnard. MarketPro Shows. Contact: 1-800-708-7555, or *http://marketpro.com* .

June 22–24 The Knowledge Management Conference. Boston, MA. DCI. Contact: (978) 470-3880, or *www.dci.com* .

June 22–25 Entrust SecureSummit 98. Chicago, IL. Entrust Technologies. Contact: 1-800-867-4141, or *http://securesummit98.entrust.com/.*

June 23–25 Windows NT Expo. Boston, MA. DCI. Contact: (978)470-3880, or *www.dci.com* .

June 23–25 Database And Client/Server World. Hynes Convention Center, Boston, MA. DCI. Contact: (978)470-3880, or *www.dci.com* .

June 24 1998 Suppliers Expo. San Jose. The Fabless Semiconductor Assoc. Contact: (972)866-7579 .

June 24–26 Building Data Warehouses and Data Marts to Deliver Measurable Business Benefits. Dallas, TX. DCI. Contact: (978)470-3880, or *www.dci.com* .

June 25–27 Graphix East 98. PA. Graphic Arts Show Company, Inc. Contact: *www.gasc.org* .

June 27 MarketPro Computer Show & Sales. Fresno Fairgrounds, Fresno. MarketPro Shows. Contact: 1-800-708-7555, or *http://marketpro.com* .

June 27–28 American Mega Computer Shows. Cashman Field Center, Las Vegas. American Mega Shows. Contact: (626)961-3782, or *www.megashow.com* .

June 27–28 Computer Fair. Henderson Convention Center, Las Vegas. National Productions. Contact: 1-800-800-5600, *CMPlist@aol.com* , or *www.lacomputerfair.com* .

June 28 MarketPro Computer Show & Sales. Scottish Rite Center, San Diego. MarketPro Shows. Contact: 1-800-708-7555, or *http://marketpro.com* .

July

July 2–7 Fourth World Exhibition of New Products. Morocco. Contact: Maroc de l'Invention (212)2-443300, or *info@maroc-invention.com* .

July 4 American Mega Computer Shows. Cal. State Fullerton. American Mega Shows. Contact: (626)961-3782, or *www.megashow.com* .

July 4–5 American Mega Computer Shows. CSU, Northridge. American Mega Shows. Contact: (626)961-3782, or *www.megashow.com* .

July 7–9 MacWorld Expo. Jacob K. Javits Convention Center, NY. IDG. Contact: 1-800-645-EXPO, or *www.macworldexpo.com* .

July 11 MarketPro Computer Show & Sales. Kern County Fairgrounds, Bakersfield. MarketPro Shows. Contact: 1-800-708-7555, or *http://marketpro.com* .

July 11–12 Computer Fair. Fairplex Expo Center, Pomona. National Productions. Contact: 1-800-800-5600, *CMPlist@aol.com* , or *www.lacomputerfair.com* .

July 10–12 Brave New Home Expo. San Francisco. Habitat For Humanity. Contact: (925) 439-0434, or *www.newworldexpo.com* .

July 12 MarketPro Computer Show & Sales. Antelope Valley Fairgrounds, Lancaster. MarketPro Shows. Contact: 1-800-708-7555, or *http://marketpro.com* .

July 18–19 Computer Fair. Sherman Square Entertainment Center, Reseda. National Productions. Contact: 1-800-800-5600, *CMPlist@aol.com* , or *www.lacomputerfair.com* .

July 18–19 American Mega Computer Shows. Cashman Field Center, Las Vegas. American Mega Shows. Contact: (626)961-3782, or *www.megashow.com* .

July 21–23 Teen Power Interactive '98. San Francisco. iqpc. Contact: 1-800-882-8684, *www.iqpc.com* .

July 25–26 American Mega Computer Shows. Pasadena Convention Center. American Mega Shows. Contact: (626)961-3782, or *www.megashow.com* .

July 28–30 Marketing Automation Conference and Expo. New York, NY. DCI. Contact: (978)470-3880, or *www.dci.com* .

July 28–30 Business Solutions And Technology Immersion Conference. New York, NY. DCI. Contact: (978) 470-3880, or *www.dci.com/datawhse* .

August

August 1–2 American Mega Computer Shows. CSU, Northridge. American Mega Shows. Contact: (626)961-3782, or *www.megashow.com* .

August 3 SENET Sales and Management Career Fair. Disneyland Hotel, Anaheim. SENET Career Expo. Contact: (626)336-8306, or *www.senetcareer.com* .

August 3–4 SENET High-Tech Career Fair. Disneyland Hotel, Anaheim. SENET Career Expo. Contact: (626)336-8306, or *www.senetcareer.com* .

August 8–9 Computer Fair. Sherman Square Entertainment Center, Reseda. National Productions. Contact: 1-800-800-5600, *CMPlist@aol.com* , or *www.lacomputerfair.com* ..

August 14–15 Multi-Cultural Internet Conference and Expo. Los Angeles. Contact: *info@mcice.com , or www.mcice.com* .

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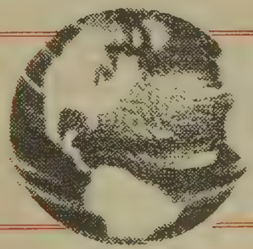

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August 15–16 American Mega Computer Shows. Cashman Field Center, Las Vegas. American Mega Shows. Contact: (626)961-3782, or *www.megashow.com*.

August 17–18 SENET Hi-Tech Career Fair. San Diego Convention Center, San Diego. SENET Career Expo. Contact: (626)336-8306, or *www.senetcareer.com*.

August 17–20 PERL Conference 2.0. San Jose. O'Reilly and Assoc. Contact: *http://conference.perl.com*.

August 29 Computer Fair. Earl Warren Showgrounds, Santa Barbara. National Productions. Contact: 1-800-800-5600, *CMPlist@aol.com*, or *www.lacomputerfair.com*.

August 30 American Mega Computer Shows. Phoenix Club, Anaheim. American Mega Shows. Contact: (626)961-3782, or *www.megashow.com*.

September

September 1–3 eBusiness World. Boston, MA. DCI. Contact: (978)470-3880, or *www.dci.com/eBusiness*.

September 2–3 Internet Expo. MA. DCI. Contact: *www.dci.com/Internet*.

September 12–16 Autodesk Design World 1998. Philadelphia, PA. Autodesk, Inc. Contact: 1-888-397-0123, or *www.autodesk.com/design world*.

September 13 Computer Fair. Sequoia Conference Center, Buena Park. National Productions. Contact: 1-800-800-5600, *CMPlist@aol.com*, or *www.lacomputerfair.com*.

September 14–17 TRACE. Santa Clara. IDG. Contact: 1-888-545-9800, or *www.trace-expo.com*.

September 19 Computer Fair. Earl Warren Showgrounds, Santa Barbara. National Productions. Contact: 1-800-800-5600, *CMPlist@aol.com*, or *www.lacomputerfair.com*.

September 22–23 SENET Hi-Tech Career Fair. Universal Hilton Hotel, Los Angeles. SENET Career Expo. Contact: (626)336-8306, or *www.senetcareer.com*.

September 24–25 Internet Expo. Toronto, ON. DCI. Contact: *www.dci.com/Internet*.

September 30–October 2 ComNet. San Francisco. IDG. Contact: 1-800-545-EXPO, or *www.comnetexpo.com*.

September 30–October 3 World PC Expo 98. Japan. Nikkei BP BizTech, Inc. Contact: *www.worldpcexpo.com*.

October

October 13–14 SENET High-Tech Career Fair. Disneyland Hotel, Anaheim. SENET Career Expo. Contact: (626)336-8306, or *www.senetcareer.com*.

October 25–28 Graph Expo 98. IL. Graphic Arts Show Company, Inc. Contact: *www.gasc.org*.

October 26–29 IMET Conference. IL. IMET. Contact: 1-800-964-9665, or *www.imetcongress.com*.

November

November 4 Internet Expo. IL. DCI. Contact: *www.dci.com/Internet*.

November 4–6 HR Technology Conference and Expo. Philadelphia, PA. Contact: *www.hrmsexpo.com/*.

November 5–6 SENET High Tech Career Fair. San Diego Convention Center, San Diego. SENET Career Expo. Contact: (626)336-8306, or *www.senetcareer.com*.

November 12–15 Sixth Foresight Conference on Molecular Nanotechnology. Santa Clara. Foresight Institute. Contact: (650)917-1122, or *www.foresight.org/conference/MNT6/*.

November 17–20 WEB.X-Florida. FL. Miller Freeman, Inc. Contact: *www.webdotx.com*.

January

January 17–27 RSA 99–Data Security Conference and Expo. San Jose. Contact: 1-800-340-3010, or *www.rsa.com/conf99/*.

January 20–23 Medicine Meets Virtual Reality: 7. San Francisco. Aligned Management Associates, Inc. Contact: *www.amainc.com*

Classes, Seminars, Workshops

June

June 13 Oracle & Oracle Financials Class. Bellflower. Computer Resolutions. Contact: (562)804-0470, or *www.computer-resolutions.com*.

June 13 Fundamentals of Web Site Production II: A Workshop. Los Angeles. UCLA Extension. Contact: (310)825-9064, or *www.unex.ucla.edu*.

June 13 Web Page Design–HTML Intermediate. Los Angeles. Hawthorne, AP Software Technology. Contact: (310)675-5180.

June 15–August 28 Kids Summer Computer Camp. Covina. Rightway Computer Training. Contact: (626)331-5667, or *www.rightway.com*.

June 16 RealTime Win32 and Java Seminar. Boston, MA. Aonix. Contact: 1-800-971-6649, or *www.aonix.com/seminars*.

June 17 Before You Buy a Mac. Santa Monica. LAMG. Contact: (310)319-1821, or *www.lamg.com*.

June 17–18 Hands-On Intro to Photoshop. Santa Monica. LAMG. Contact: (310)319-1821, or *www.lamg.com*.

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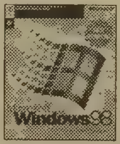

June 18 Web Page Design—HTML Intermediate. Los Angeles. Hawthorne, AP Software Technology. Contact: (310)675-5180.

June 19 Hands-On Intermediate Quark. Santa Monica. LAMG. Contact: (310)319-1821, or *www.lamg.com*.

June 20 Fundamentals of Web Site Production II: A Workshop. Los Angeles. UCLA Extension. Contact: (310)825-9064, or *www.unex.ucla.edu*.

June 20 Hands-On Beyond HTML. Santa Monica. LAMG. Contact: (310)319-1821, or *www.lamg.com*.

June 20 Intro. to the Internet-Free. Covina. Rightway Computer Training. Contact: (626)331-5667, or *www.rightway.com*.

June 20 Intro to Web Page Design. Los Angeles. Hawthorne, AP Software Technology. Contact: (310)675-5180.

June 21 Intro. to Windows '95. Long Beach. MegaByte Coffeehouse. Contact: (562)986-6892.

June 23 Hands-On Intro to AfterEffects. Santa Monica. LAMG. Contact: (310)319-1821, or *www.lamg.com*.

June 27 Adobe Photoshop 4.0. Long Beach. MegaByte Coffeehouse. Contact: (562)986-6892.

June 27 Intro to Web Page Design. Los Angeles. Hawthorne, AP Software Technology. Contact: (310)675-5180.

June 28 Internet Workshop for Beginners. Long Beach. MegaByte Coffeehouse. Contact: (562)986-6892.

July

July 1 Hands-On Adv. Beginning Mac. Santa Monica. LAMG. Contact: (310)319-1821, or *www.lamg.com*.

July 11 Oracle & Oracle Financials Class. Bellflower. Computer Resolutions. Contact: (562)804-0470, or *www.computer-resolutions.com*.

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July 15 Getting Started on Internet. Santa Monica. LAMG. Contact: (310)319-1821, or *www.lamg.com*.

July 15–16 Hands-On Intro to Painter. Santa Monica. LAMG. Contact: (310)319-1821, or *www.lamg.com*.

July 16 Before You Buy a Mac. Santa Monica. LAMG. Contact: (310)319-1821, or *www.lamg.com*.

July 17 Hands-On Intro to Director. Santa Monica. LAMG. Contact: (310)319-1821, or *www.lamg.com*.

July 18 Hands-On Intro to AfterEffects. Santa Monica. LAMG. Contact: (310)319-1821, or *www.lamg.com*.

July 18 Intro to Photoshop. Santa Monica. LAMG. Contact: (310)319-1821, or *www.lamg.com*.

July 18 Automating Everything with Your Mac. Santa Monica. LAMG. Contact: (310)319-1821, or *www.lamg.com*.

July 21–22-Hands-On Intro to Photoshop. Santa Monica. LAMG. Contact: (310)319-1821, or *www.lamg.com*.

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July 24 Hands-On Intro to Director. Santa Monica. LAMG. Contact: (310)319-1821, or *www.lamg.com*.

July 25 Photoshop Power. Santa Monica. LAMG. Contact: (310)319-1821, or *www.lamg.com*.

July 25 Hands-On ClarisWorks. Santa Monica. LAMG. Contact: (310)319-1821, or *www.lamg.com*.

July 28 Hands-On Freehand. Santa Monica. LAMG. Contact: (310)319-1821, or *www.lamg.com*.

July 29–30 Hands-On Inter–Adv. Photoshop. Santa Monica. LAMG. Contact: (310)319-1821, or *www.lamg.com*.

August

August 1 Hands-On Intermediate PageMaker. Santa Monica. LAMG. Contact: (310)319-1821, or *www.lamg.com*.

August 8 Oracle & Oracle Financials Class. Bellflower. Computer Resolutions. Contact: (562)804-0470, or *www.computer-resolutions.com*.

September

September 12 Oracle & Oracle Financials Class. Bellflower. Computer Resolutions. Contact: (562)804-0470, or *www.computer-resolutions. com*.

October

October 10 Oracle & Oracle Financials Class. Bellflower. Computer Resolutions. Contact: (562)804-0470, or *www.computer-resolutions.com*.

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November 14 Oracle & Oracle Financials Class. Bellflower. Computer Resolutions. Contact: (562)804-0470, or *www.computer-res olutions.com*.

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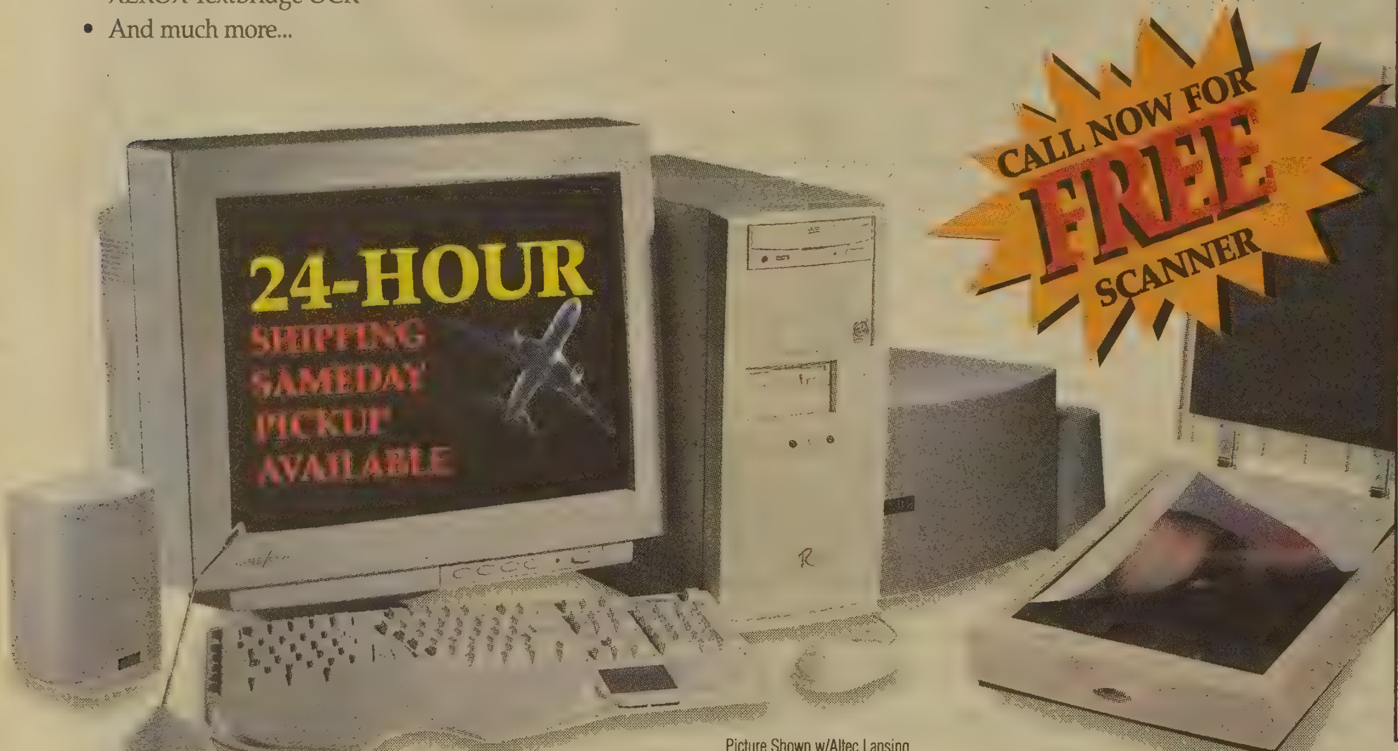

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Brain Toys BBS. (818)988-3550, 557-8697, 707-4476, 700-9877; (213)255-2495; (310)858-0070; *www.braintoys.com* , or telnet free: *braintoys.com* . MajorMud, 32 lines, TradeWars, DOOM 2, Backgammon, chat. Full Internet access, first month free, all ages. [Exp. #182]

Coffee Break BBS. (310)425-5710, 320-5000; (714)670-6500, 572-8800, 537-4300, 262-1200; (626)961-1700, 447-6100, 797-6400, (909) 865-7533. General interest, 20 lines, chat, MajorMud, TradeWars, files, email. Free trial. Ultimate caffeine buzz! Sysop: Coffee. [Exp. #182]

Eden Online. (714)548-1900, 620-5336, 472-9456, 528-7226, (562)421-2420, (310) 352-4199, 838-1707, (626) 336-9322, (909)637-1600; Telnet: *edenbbs.com* , *www.edenbbs.com* . 14,400–28,800. Southern California's hottest online social club. Games, chat, parties, contests, MajorMud, and more! 65 lines and FULL INTERNET! 2-week FREE trial. Sysop: Daniel Vesely. [Exp. #180]

EOL Online. (626)296-1169, (213)666-0166, (818)783-4575. 24 hrs., Great online adult community! Hosted chats, online games, Farwest trivia, MatchMaker, Happy Hour parties, thousands of downloadable GIFS and shareware, one month free trial! Sysop: Boots. [Exp. #182]

Exo BBS. (213)490-0556, 330-1609, 531-1608; (310)819-0554, 765-0554, 735-0554, 734-1908, 526-0594, 954-0534; (562)506-0531; (626) 532-0684, 639-0554; (714) 869-1501, 676-1501, 782-1502, 591-0554, 930-1601, 481-0028, 485-0028, 653-0309, 849-0574; (818)742-0554, 741-0572; (909)689-4534. *http://bbs.exo.com* ; Telnet: *bbs.exo.com* . 24 hrs., 2400–56,000. Support for Amiga, IBM, Mac. Email, full Internet, online games, messages bases, files area, Fidonet, chatting, and MORE! Free and pay accounts available. [Exp. #182]

Miller's Party Board. (213) 569-9191, 727-0251; (310) 815-0117, 212-3469; (562) 425-7264, 929-4304; (626) 577-5880, 852-9474, 961-2458; (714)220-0887, 537-4436; (818)240-8296, 769-2302, 882-0142; Telnet: *mpb.com* . 24 hrs., 28,800. Chat, games including MajorMud, Tradewars 2002, Crosswordz, Full Internet Access, forums, modem-to-modem gaming, live games, more. 7-day free trial. Sysop: Jack Stern. [Exp. #182]

Tiger's BBS. (213)223-8403; (626)296-9173, 446-0605. 24 hrs., up to 33,600. MMUD, chat areas, files, games, email. Free, but accept donations. Sysop: Tiger. [Exp. #182]

VGN BBS. (818)623-9812; (213)258-9719; (310)837-2450. MajorMud, TradeWars, and Tessier Triva. We have 3 relays up so far, and still adding more. Sysop: Martin Geisler . [Exp. #182]

310

Los Angeles Macintosh Group BBS. (310)451-LAMG. 8-N-1, 24 hrs. FirstClass, 16 lines. 40,000 calls/month. Shareware, forums include DTP, multimedia, WWW, employment exchange, classifieds, more. [Exp. #182]

South Bay Apple Mac User Group BBS. (310)792-8083. FirstClass. Large library, multiple conferences, *www.sbamug.org* . [Exp. #180]

Upper Transylvania BBS. (310)515-6843, 515-7953, 515-7995, 515-1757, 768-3399. 24 hrs., 14,400. Christian, family-oriented, 20 active CD-ROMs updated regularly. Free. Sysop: Ron Hoffman. [Exp. #181]

562

Telery. (562)494-0909, Telnet: *telery.com* , *www.telery.com* . FREE access, chat, online casino, games, LORD, TradeWars 2002, Trivia, free Internet email/homepage. Sysops: Cobra & LUS. [Exp. #181]

626

The Better Half BBS. (626) 918-5757, 918-1719, 931-2432. 8-N-1, 24 hrs., 33,600. Free. Over 110,000 files online. Free access with first time call-back verifier. No fees whatsoever! Sysop: Ron Cohen. [Exp. #180]

714

Orange County Underground. (714)992-1196. 14,400+. Running NovaLink Pro., So. Cal interests; chat with locals, freebies, family fun, MIDI files, MAC & PC files, Gray Market. Specializing in So. Cal. Dwnld. custom Mac interface or PC/ANSI. Supports all platforms. FREE! Donations welcome. Sysop: Doug. [Exp. #181]

The Abyss BBS. (714)848-9920. 8-N-1, 24 hrs., 300–33,600. WWIVnet, FidoNet echos, message bases, free file transfer section, online games and more. No fee! Sysop: Byte. [Exp. #181]

The VIBA Connection. (714) 454-7751. 8-N-1, 24 hrs., Up to 33,600. Free access. Files, games, forums, CD-ROM filebase. Since 2/94. Sysop: Robert Coop. [Exp. #182]

818

Earthquake City BBS. (818) 368-3337; *http://members.tripod.com/~eqcitybbs/Index.htm* . 8-N-1, 24 hrs., 33,600. Free. All ages. Files, messages, games. Fee for Internet email, 1GB online. Sysop: Steven Libis. [Exp. #182]

909

The Parallel. (909)460-0433 8-N-1, 33,600. Free. Telegard 3.09, Many message areas, instant download access and onliners. Sysop: Matt Munson. [Exp. #182]

User Groups

Atari

ATESIG Atari 8-Bit SIG. 145 Surf Pl., Seal Beach. Cooperative user group for model railroad applications. Contact: (562)430-5433, or *d.mcalliste2@genie.com* . [Exp:#183]

Commodore

CHLB—Commodore Helpers Of Long Beach. Meetings: 2nd Sat., 9:00 am., Community Methodist Church, 6380 Orange Ave., Long Beach. Newsletter, large library, monthly disks. Contact: Dorothy, (310)323-9265. [Exp:#185]

Commodore-Apple Helpers of Long Beach (CHLB). Meetings: 2nd Sat., 9:00 am, Community Presbyterian Church, Fellowship Hall, 6380 Orange Ave., North Long Beach. Newsletter, question/answer period, demos, library, and more for all 8-bit, Commodore, and Apple II users. Contact: Herb (562)429-8998, or *Camaron@earthcorp.com* . [Exp:#185]

IBM And Compatibles

Greater South Bay PC Users Group. Meetings: 2nd Thurs., 7:30 pm, Torrance Recreation Center, behind Torrance main library. Contact: (310)373-3989, or *rsh532@aol.com* , *www.lafn.org/community/gsbug* . [Exp:#183]

Long Beach IBM PC And Compatibles Users Group. Meetings: 3rd Wed., 7:00 pm, Masonic Temple, 5155 E. Pacific Coast Hwy., Long Beach. We welcome the novice and the experienced. BBS, video library, newsletter, SIGs. Contact: Jim Wells, (310)439-7114. [Exp:#181]

Los Angeles Computer Society. Meetings: 3rd Tues., 7:00 pm, Robert Frost Auditorium, Culver City High School, 4401 Elenda St., Culver City. Door prizes, vendor presentations, product review, special interest groups, BBS w/ Internet email. Contact: (310) 471-2726, or *http://geocities.com/~lacspcug/* . [Exp:#181]

NOCCC (North Orange County Computer Club). Meetings: 1st Sun, 9:00 am, Chapman University, 333 N. Glassell Ave., Orange. Speakers on hardware/software/Internet, 25 SIGs, demonstrations, newsletter, helpline, raffles, consignment table, member benefits. Call: (714)998-8080, or *www.noccc.org* . [Exp:#183]

Orange County IBM PC Users Group. Meetings: 2nd Tues., 6:30 pm. Speakers, software, newsletter, BBS. Open to public, all welcome. Contact: (714)990-0580, or *ocpug@prodigy.com* . [Exp:#181]

Pasadena IBM Users Group. Meetings: 1st Wed., 7:00 pm, 2184 N. Lake Ave., Altadena. Speakers on hardware/software, demonstrations, SIGs, library, newsletter, and Web site. Call: Steve Bass, (626)791-1300, or *www.pibmug.org* . [Exp:#181]

Saddleback Valley PC Users Group. Meetings: 3rd Sat., 9:00 am, Saddleback College, 28000 Marguerite Pkwy., Rm. 205, Business and General Studies Bldg., Mission Viejo. Newsletter, question/answer period, demos, shareware software library. Beginners or experienced users are welcome. Contact: (714)582-4623, or *JeromeMan@aol.com* . [Exp:#181]

User Groups

San Gabriel Valley Technology Users Group. Meetings: 2nd Fri., 7:00 pm, Arcadia Park Senior Citizens Center, 405 S. Santa Anita Ave., Arcadia. Support for Tandy and IBM compatibles, newsletter, RAM session. Contact: Jack Nock, (626)578-0411, or *jack.nock@worldnet.att.net* . [Exp:#185]

Santa Clarita Valley PC-Group. Meetings: 2nd Wed., 7:00 pm, Valencia Town Center Community Room. Dedicated to PC literacy. Come join us. Contact: (805)298-1680, or *www.scvpcg.com* . [Exp:#183]

Simi Valley Computer User Group (SVCUG). Meetings: 2nd Thurs. and 4th Wed., 7:30 pm, Simi Valley Public Library. Demos, Q&A, hands-on troubleshooting, for beginners and advanced users. Member help list and current meetings on *www.svcug.org* . Contact: Barbara Cott (805)581-2495, or *bobbie@wgn.net* . [Exp:#185]

Southern California Computer Society. Meetings: 4th Tues., 7:00 pm, Farmers & Merchants Bank, Rossmoor Mall, 12535 Seal Beach Blvd., Los Alamitos. For all interested in IBM and compatible computers; newsletter. $20/yr. Contact: Don Schmidt, (562)424-4634. [Exp:#184]

Thousand Oaks Personal Computer Club (TOPCC). Meetings: 4th Thurs., 6:00 pm, Goebel Senior Center, 1385 E. Janss Rd., Thousand Oaks. Starts with Q & A session targeted at novice to expert levels of computer knowledge. Contact: Harry, (805)495-8325, or Eli, (805)496-8053. [Exp:#185]

Tug-Net. Meetings: Every Tues., 7:00 pm, Granada Pavilion, 11128 Balboa Blvd. Granada Hills. Plenty of parking. Vendor presentations, Speakers on hardware/software; help for new users, Special Interest Groups, Newsletter, more. Contact: (818)249-1629, 884-9441, or *www.tugnet.org* . [Exp:#185]

Valley Computer Club (VCC). Meetings: 2nd Tues., 7:00 pm, Burbank YMCA, 321 E. Magnolia Blvd., Burbank (wheelchair access). Vendor presentations, SIGs, newsletter. All welcome. Contact: Grayce Hruda, (818)842-3707, *burvally@pacificnet.net* , or *www.pacificnet.net/~burvally* . [Exp:#185]

Internet

LA Webspinners. Meetings: 1st Sat., 10:00 am, 10800 West Pico Blvd, Corner of Overland Ave. at the Westside Pavillon Mall, Community Room, 3rd fl., Los Angeles. *www.la.iics.org* . [Exp:#182]

Visual Interdev User Group. Meetings: 3rd Mon., 7:00 pm, San Gabrial Valley Web site developing. Contact: (909)625-6202, or *cherokeeguy@juno.com* . [Exp:#182]

Macintosh

Champions Of The Mac Proletariat (CHOMP). Meetings: 4th Thurs., 7:00 pm. Bauer Forum, Claremont McKenna College, Claremont. Q&A; raffle of useful software; vendor presentations; exchange views, opinions, expertise. Contact: Al Seltzer, (909) 626-7784, or *AlSeltzer@aol.com* , or Mitch Cohen, (909) 605-1000, ext. 11, or *www.chompmug.org* . [Exp:#184]

Los Angeles Macintosh Group (LAMG). Meetings: 4th Thurs., 7:30 pm, Call for location. Vendor presentations, raffle, 25+ SIGs, seminars, hands-on classes, BBS, monthly magazine. Guests welcome. Contact: (310)319-1821, or *www.lamg. org* . [Exp:#182]

South Bay Apple Mac User Group. Meetings: Last Wed., 7:30 pm, Knob Hill Community Center, 320 Knob Hill, Redondo Beach. Newsletter, PD library, demos, and software raffles. Contact: C.W. Mitchell, (310) 644-3315. [Exp:#183]

West Orange County Mac User Group (WOCMUG). Meetings: last Tues., 7:00 pm, The "Friendliest Mac Club Around" features the latest news about Mac, Q&A, vendor presentations, demos, raffles, and a newsletter. Call: Lynn, (714)892-8910, or Harriet, (562)431-9623. [Exp:#185]

Whittier Area Macintosh User Group. Meetings: 2nd Sat., 9:30 am, CFF Church, 14322 Telegraph Rd., Whittier. Beginner to experienced. Q&A, demos, raffle, hot disk, SIGs, newsletter. Contact: (562)906-0059, or *www.geocities.com/SiliconValley/Pines/6042/* . [Exp:#181]

Miscellaneous

Glendora Seniors Computer Club. Meetings: 2nd and 4th Wed., 1:00 pm, Lefetra Senior Center, 133 E. Foothill Blvd., Glendora. IBM, presentations, SIGS, newsletter, library, Q&A period, all skill levels. Troubleshooting help. Contact: (626)914-0560, or *www.starquest.net/gscc* . [Exp:#184]

OCCUG (Orange Coast Corel Users Group). Meetings: 2nd Sat., 9:00 am, Huntington Beach Adult School, 1666 Tunstall Ln., Huntington Beach. Demos by a certified COREL instructor, newsletter, giveaways, guest experts, all welcome. Contact: Wayne Kaplan, (714)968-2509, or *www.wjkaplan.com/oc-cug* . [Exp:#181]

Orange County Linux Users Group (OCLUG). See Web site for location. Meetings are early in the month at a place, time and location given on our Web site. Supports Linux users in solving their hardware/software/networking problems. Contact: *Richard_Earhart@compuserve.com* , or *www.oclug.org* . [Exp:#183]

Performance Animation Society. Dedicated to the emerging field of 3D Performance Animation, virtual theatre, digital puppeteering and motion capture, and 3D character animation. Contact: Greg Panos (562)434-4436, or *www.PAsociety.org* . [Exp:#184]

The Lightwave-Toaster/Flyer Group (LTF) Meetings: 2nd Sat., 12:00 noon Los Angeles. The Pickwick Banquet Center, 1001 Riverside Dr., Burbank. Support for users of NewTek products, beginner–advanced. Demos, tutorials, help. Contact: Glenn, (818)240-0399, or email Dan at *janmoore@empirenet.com* . [Exp:#185]

The San Gabriel Valley Linux Users Group. Meetings: 2nd Thurs., Pasadena. Also welcoming FreeBSD. See our Web site for details at *http://zot.iipo.gtegsc.com/Linux* , or email *ak252@lafn.org* . Contact: (626) 398-0634. [Exp:#185]

Networking

Los Angeles NT Users Group—LANTUG. Meetings: 2nd Weds., To enhance users' knowledge of the operating system, its features and benefits. For more information, go to *www.lantug.org* . Contact: Bill Spaulding, *www.lantug.org* . [Exp:#183]

OCNET—Orange County NetWare Users Group. Meetings: 2nd Tues. 6:30 pm, Novell, 18101 Von Karmon, 5th Flr., Irvine. Specializes in Novell NetWare solutions. Contact: (714)250-4677 ext. 14, or *www.stcweb.com/ocnet/*. [Exp:#182]

Orange County Network Gaming Group. Play multi-player games on a LAN. Date/time/location to be announced. Contact: Neil, (714)840-9011, or *outlaw@linkline.com* . [Exp:#181]

Windows

Power Graphics User Network (PGUN). Meetings: last Tues., 7:30 pm, Glendale. Windows-based graphics and publishing applications (CorelDRAW, Ventura Publisher, Picture Publisher, Kai's PowerTools), and techniques for image editing, Web design, 3D, multimedia, etc. Contact: Randy Tobin, (818)955-5830, or *www.thetadata.com* . [Exp:#181]

WINNERSWINdows usERS. Meetings: 2nd Sat., 9:00 am, Orange Coast College, Science Bldg., Rm. #149, 2701 Fairview Rd., Costa Mesa. All Windows covered, industry speakers, tips and tricks. Software library, newsletter, Internet SIG. Everyone welcome. Contact: (714)644-5782, or *http://members.aol.com/ocwinners* . [Exp:#183]

Associations

AITP—California Southland Association of Information Technology Professionals. Meetings: 3rd Wed., 6:30 pm, Gateway Plaza Holiday Inn, 14299 Valley View, La Mirada (I-5 at Valley View exit). A professional association providing new technology, management topics, networking, and education to the Orange County/L.A. area. Contact: Cathy Grammer-Margolin, (714)647-1617, 645-5950, or *http://members.aol.com/calsoudpma* . [Exp:#180]

Independent Computer Consultants Association (ICCA). Meetings: 2nd Thurs., 6:00 pm, Sportsman's Lodge, 12825 Ventura Blvd., Studio City. An organization promoting professionalism, expertise, and ethics in the provision of computer services and awareness of the availability of such services by independent professionals. (213)872-1811. [Exp:#180]

Internet Developers Association. Meetings: Last Tues., 7:00 pm, 21st Fl., 1999 Ave. of the Stars, Century City. Hook up with fellow Web developers and service providers. Free presentations at each meeting. Contact: Corinna Moebius, (310)397-8854. [Exp:#180]

Lightwave–LA. Lightwave 3D artists looking for work? Register with Lightwave–LA, a FREE online database dedicated to connecting employers with graphic artists experienced with NewTek's Lightwave 3D modeling and animation program. Contact: *http://home.earthlink.net/~ltfgroup/Lightwave-LA* . [Exp:#184]

Webmasters' Guild. Meetings: The country's first professional association of Web masters is establishing an OC chapter. Contact: Sussette Blasa, *stblasa@earthlink.net* . [Exp:#180]

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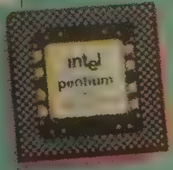

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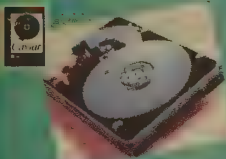

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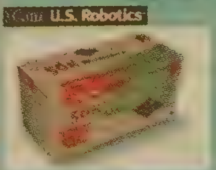

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Only Great Plains Dynamics, Impact Encore, SBT Pro, and Solomon create a log recording the time of each user access. All but MAS 90 and SBT Pro allow single character passwords. After analyzing how each package implements password protection, the report concludes that, "Little serious effort was devoted to their design."

The investigators were gratified that Visual Accounting encrypts data files, which none of the other programs do. Impact Encore stores data in ASCII format, making it vulnerable to intruders. Most programs files are compiled to protect against someone tampering with the program; however, Impact Encore and Traverse program files are not. The investigation of data security concludes, "Failure by this segment of the accounting software industry to include encryption is a significant shortcoming."

Regarding input controls, most of the programs include routines that validate data and check for reasonableness of data entry. Great Plains, for example, allows reasonableness limits to be set by the user and by the system administrator. MAS 90 and Traverse provide no administrator controls.

The report's strongest criticism came in response to processing controls:

> To our surprise, all packages except MAS 90 permit printing of financial statements even when unposted transactions exist...All except MAS 90, Solomon, Traverse and Visual Accounting permit closing the general ledger with no warning even though financial statements have not been printed.

This can result in incomplete reports, and weak accounting controls.

Selecting accounting software suitable for your business is a difficult and time consuming task. While every program has limitations, a particular technical shortcoming might not matter to you, or maybe you can work around it. The important thing is to identify program limitations at an early stage of the selection process, and then evaluate how they would affect your business. ◆

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Complimentary Reprints:

The following is available free of charge from David Simon's office at (510)893-5753.

Harley M. Courtney, Cheryl L. Prachyl, Terryann Glandon, "Guide To Accounting Software," *Journal of Accountancy*, Vol. 185, No. 3, pp. 44-61 (March 1998).

Resources:

AccPac for Windows
ACCPAC International
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www.accpac.com

Great Plains Dynamics
Great Plains Software, Inc.
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www.gps.com

Impact Encore
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SBT Corp.
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Solomon IV for Windows
Solomon Software, Inc.
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Traverse
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Visual Accounting for Windows
RealWorld Corp.
1-800-678-6336
www.realworld.com

Platinum for Windows
Platinum Software Corp.
1-800-999-1809

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PalmPilot Alternative

PalmPilot users can utilize the JP Systems One-Touch product, which allows you to connect a PalmPilot to a SkyTel AccessLink two-way pager and essentially get PageWriter 2000 features. You don't save any money though. The service cost is exactly the same, and the pager is about the same price as the PageWriter. Plus, you need to buy the One-Touch software and cable, which runs about $70. (Note: The One-Touch also works with MCI's interactive service.)

Since the pager is smaller than the PageWriter, you save a little on bulk, but then to use it with the PalmPilot you must physically connect it with a cable. However, the pager does have enough functionality to receive and send messages all by itself.

A nice thing about using this setup is that the PageWriter can use the PalmPilot's address book. This eliminates the redundancy of having multiple databases. The PalmPilot app requires about 70KB of memory. TCP/IP support is not required, so the PalmPilot Personal model will work just fine. (However, the One-Touch is not compatible with the PageWriter 2000.)

> *The PageWriter can use the PalmPilot's address book. This eliminates the redundancy of having multiple databases.*

Alternatives

I see digital phones as being competition for the PageWriter 2000. These now offer inbound alphanumeric paging, as well as email capabilities.

The PageWriter has the advantage of being able to send outgoing messages including Internet email. It's also smaller than a digital phone, has full QWERTY keyboard, offers handheld PC-like features (address book, installable apps, etc.), is dockable to a PC, has vibrating ring standard, has a national-based service and more.

Of course, you can't make a person-to-person call.

In an emergency, or for someone who really needs to converse with another party in real time, you'd have to give the nod to the digital phone. However, that leaves a pretty big market for the PageWriter. (Of course, you could always carry both!) I probably do more correspondence via email than phone, but I'd be hard pressed to give up my wireless.

It's still a question of trade-offs. In my opinion, there is no product yet that covers all bases. How much to do you want to spend? How many gadgets are you willing to tote around? Does anyone really need to be "that" connected?

If I'm leaving you confused, you're not alone. At least, there appear to be some interesting possibilities. All we need is a little convergence.

Next Month: PalmIII

Yes, that's right. Next month look for a hands-on review of the new PalmIII, the much anticipated next generation PalmPilot. It arrived a few days ago and I'm already giving it a good shakedown. So until next time, keep reaching for the stars and keep those batteries charged. ◆

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Resources:

JP Systems
www.jpsystems.com

Motorola PageWriter 2000
www.mot.com/MIMS/MSPG/Products/Two-way/pagewriter/

SkyTel
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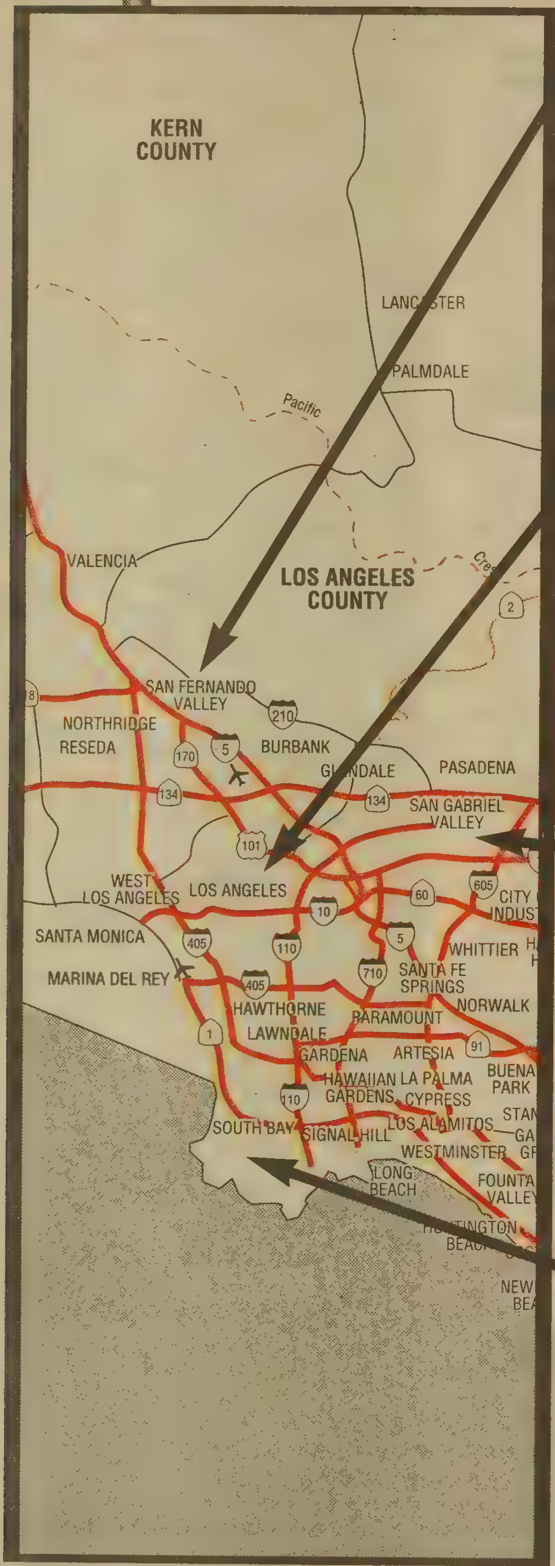

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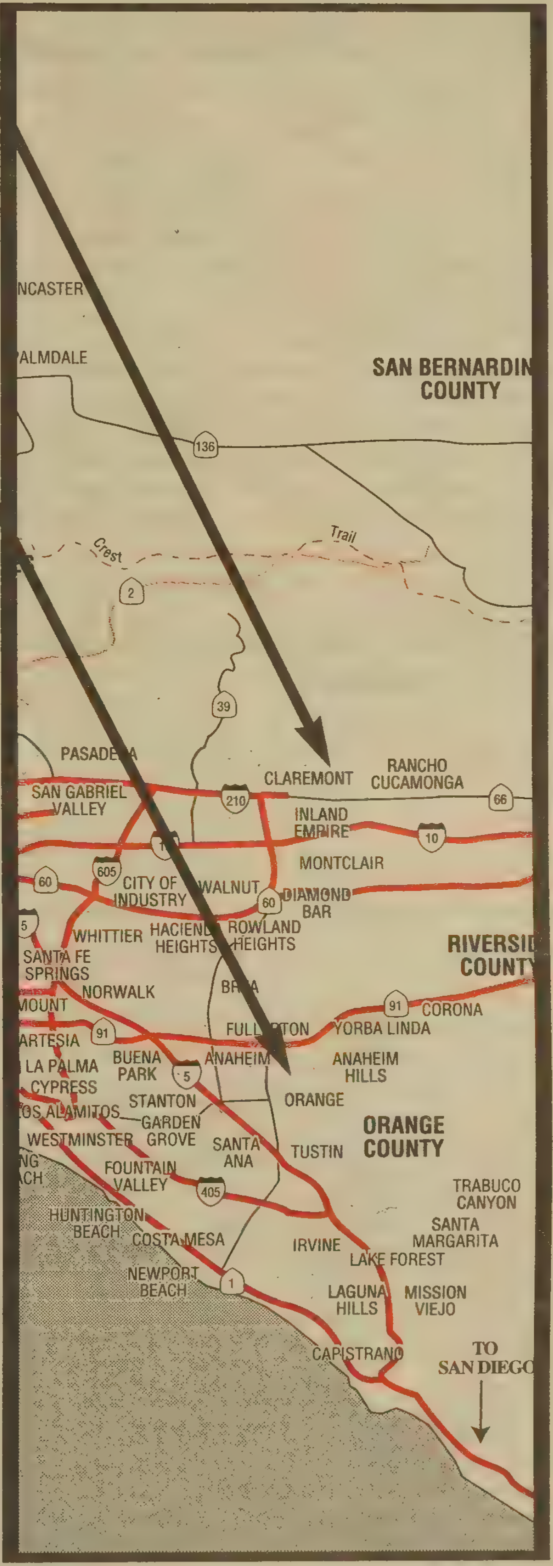

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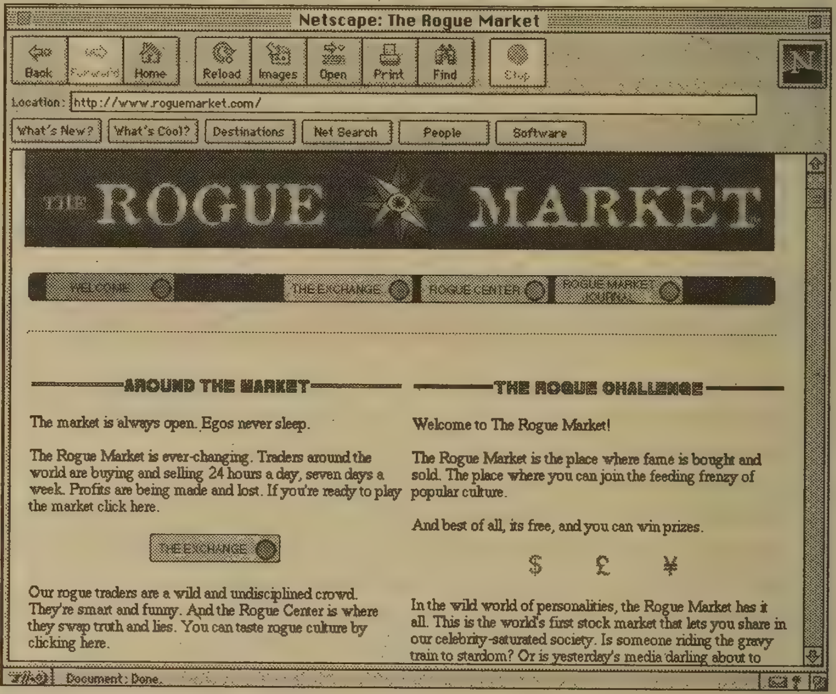
wall street meets "entertainment tonight"

continued from page 136

And what about the blushing bride? The entertainment fantasy-game "stock markets" can bring a hefty dowry to the marriage. While precise figures are unavailable, I'd estimate the total number of users of sites such as the Hollywood Stock Exchange (*www.hsx.com*), Wall Street Sports (*www.wallstreet sports.com*), Rogue Market (*www.roguemarket.com*), Mr. Showbiz' "Box Office Challenge" (*www.mrshowbiz.com*), and E! Online's "Studio Boss" (*www.eonline.com*) at upwards of 500,000, and growing 25–50% annually. Indeed, an analysis of the most popular service, the Hollywood Stock Exchange (HSX), suggests a surprisingly strong commercial opportunity in this arena.



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"Online securities trading is one of the standout successes of Internet commerce," notes research analyst Bill Burnham—and that's putting it mildly.

The HSX boasts 60,000 registered users and is growing at 1–2% daily. Company officials say 10% of the HSX's users are active traders who visit the site an average of once a day to buy and sell "stocks" and "options" in stars, movies, scripts, etc.

What's more, the current trading volume on the HSX is 50 million shares daily—more than the American Stock Exchange! And the face value of the faux securities traded each day is more than $2 billion. Not too shabby.

Indeed, the success of fantasy-game stock markets would seem to validate the notion that there is broad public interest (among Internet users, at least) in investing in entertainment.

Even though such entertainment-oriented investing is still just a fantasy, the eager groom is lustily eyeing the prospective bride's luscious new market and heaving revenue potential.

So don't be surprised if this pair moves beyond the flirtation stage to a marriage that will produce a new Internet market in entertainment-based securities. ◆

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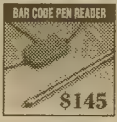

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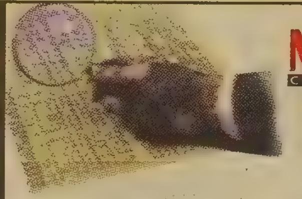

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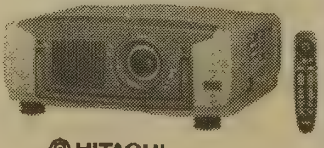

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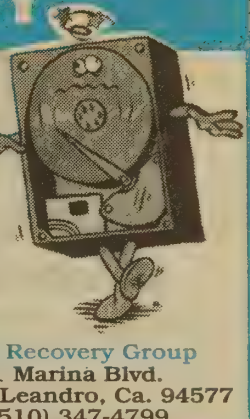

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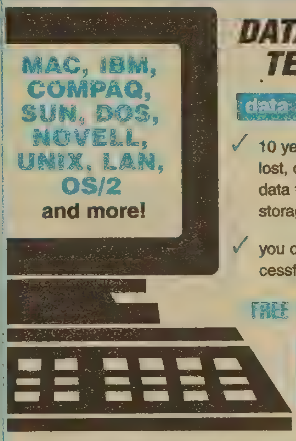

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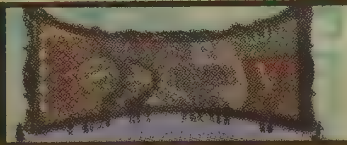

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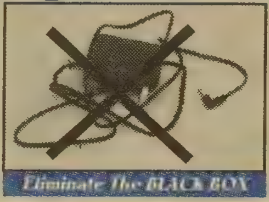

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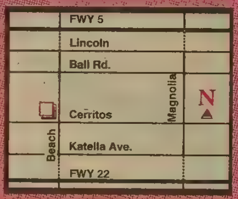

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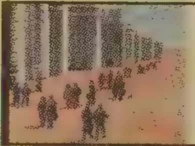

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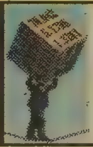

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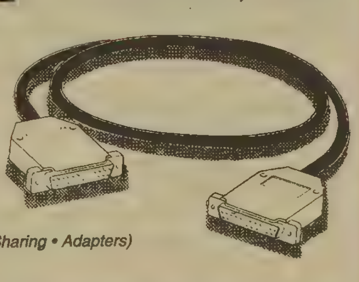

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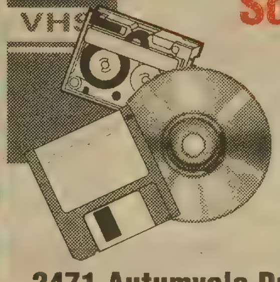

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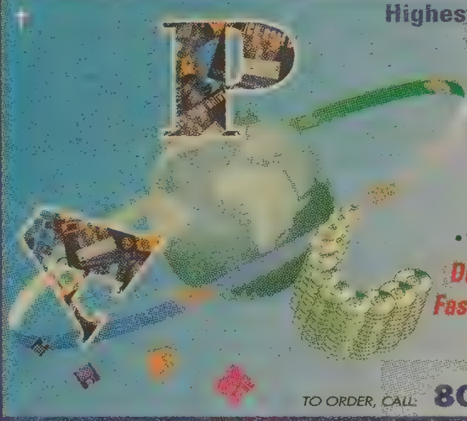

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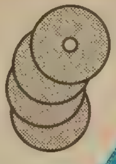

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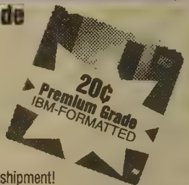

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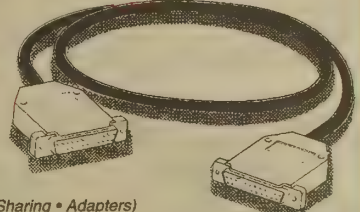

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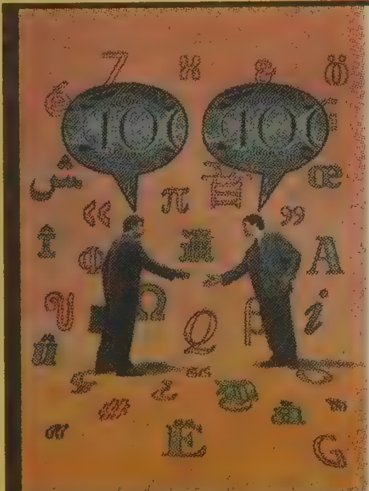

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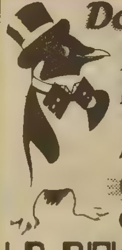

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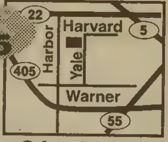

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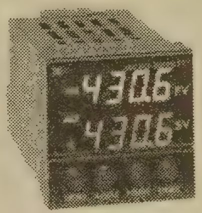

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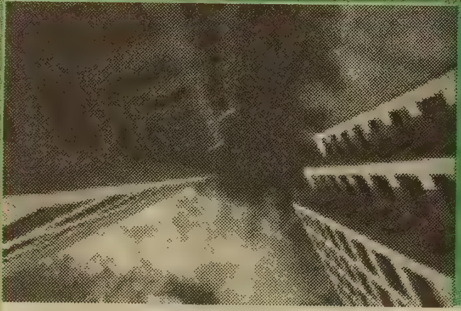

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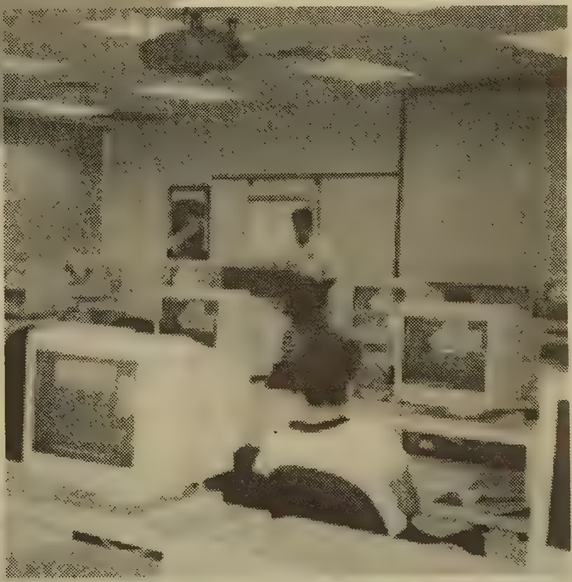

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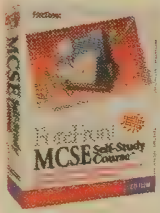

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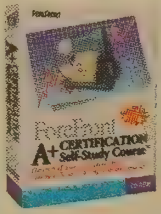

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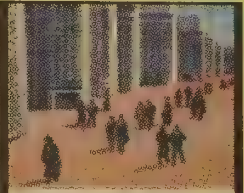

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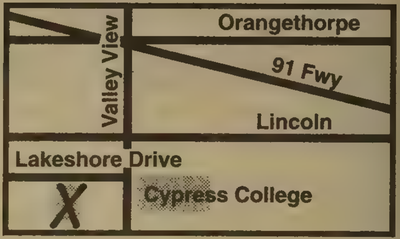

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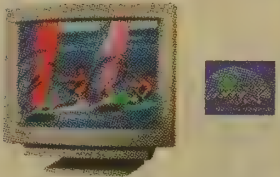

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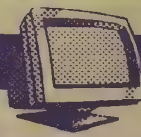

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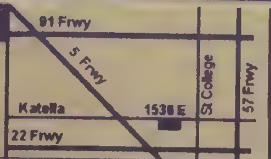

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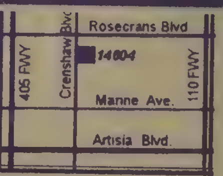

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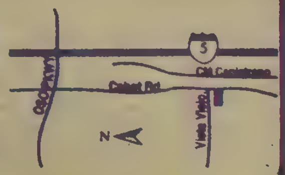

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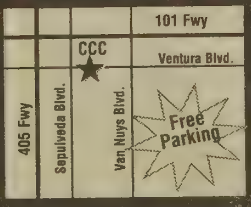

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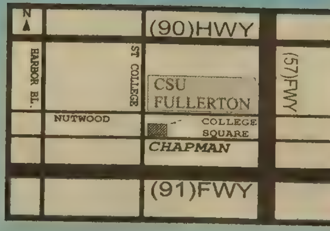

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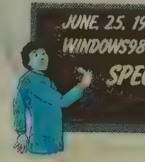

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1.44MB Floppy Drive
4MB RAM PCI 3D Video Card
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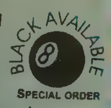

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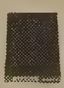

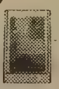

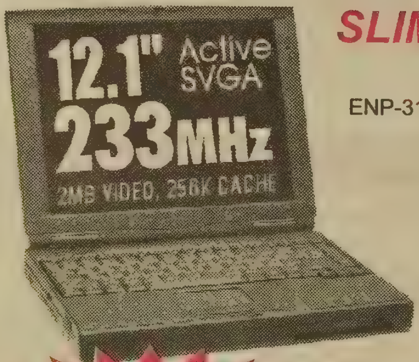

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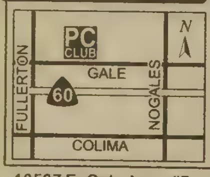

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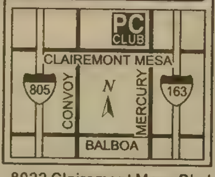

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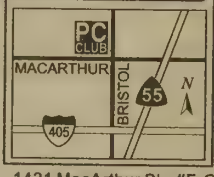

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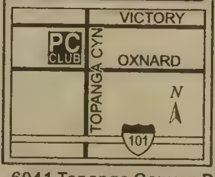

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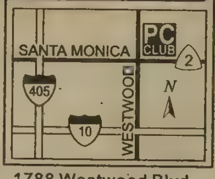

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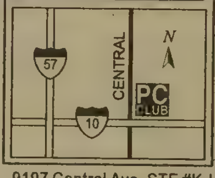

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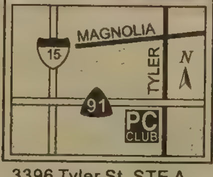

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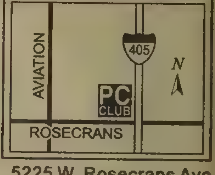

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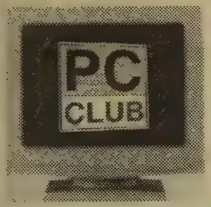

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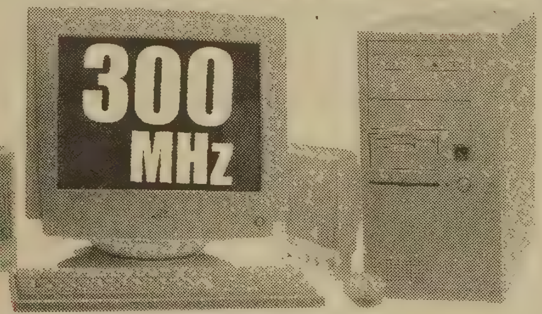

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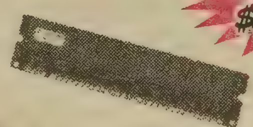

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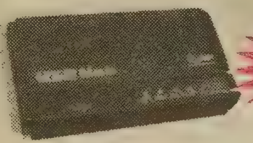

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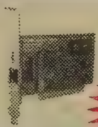

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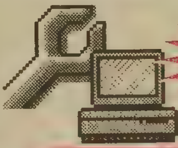

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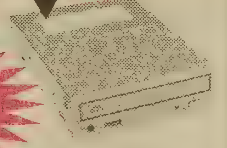

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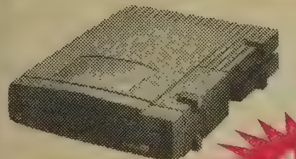

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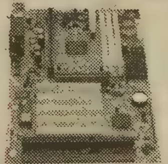

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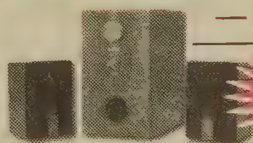

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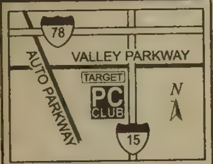

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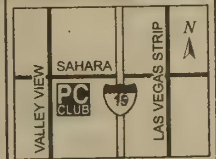

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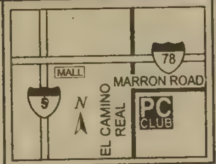

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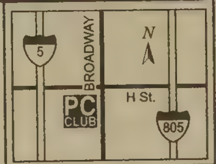

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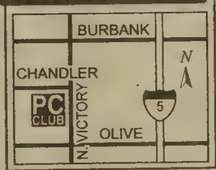

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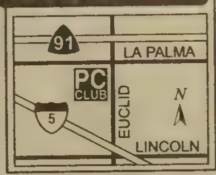

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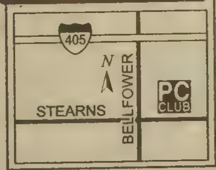

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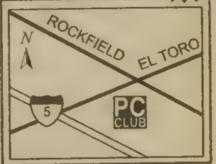

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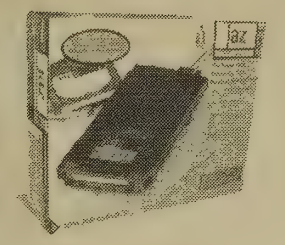

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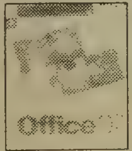

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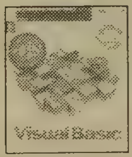

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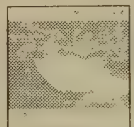

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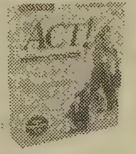

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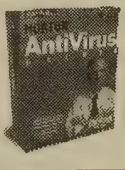

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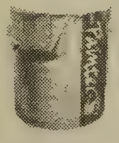

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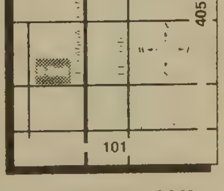

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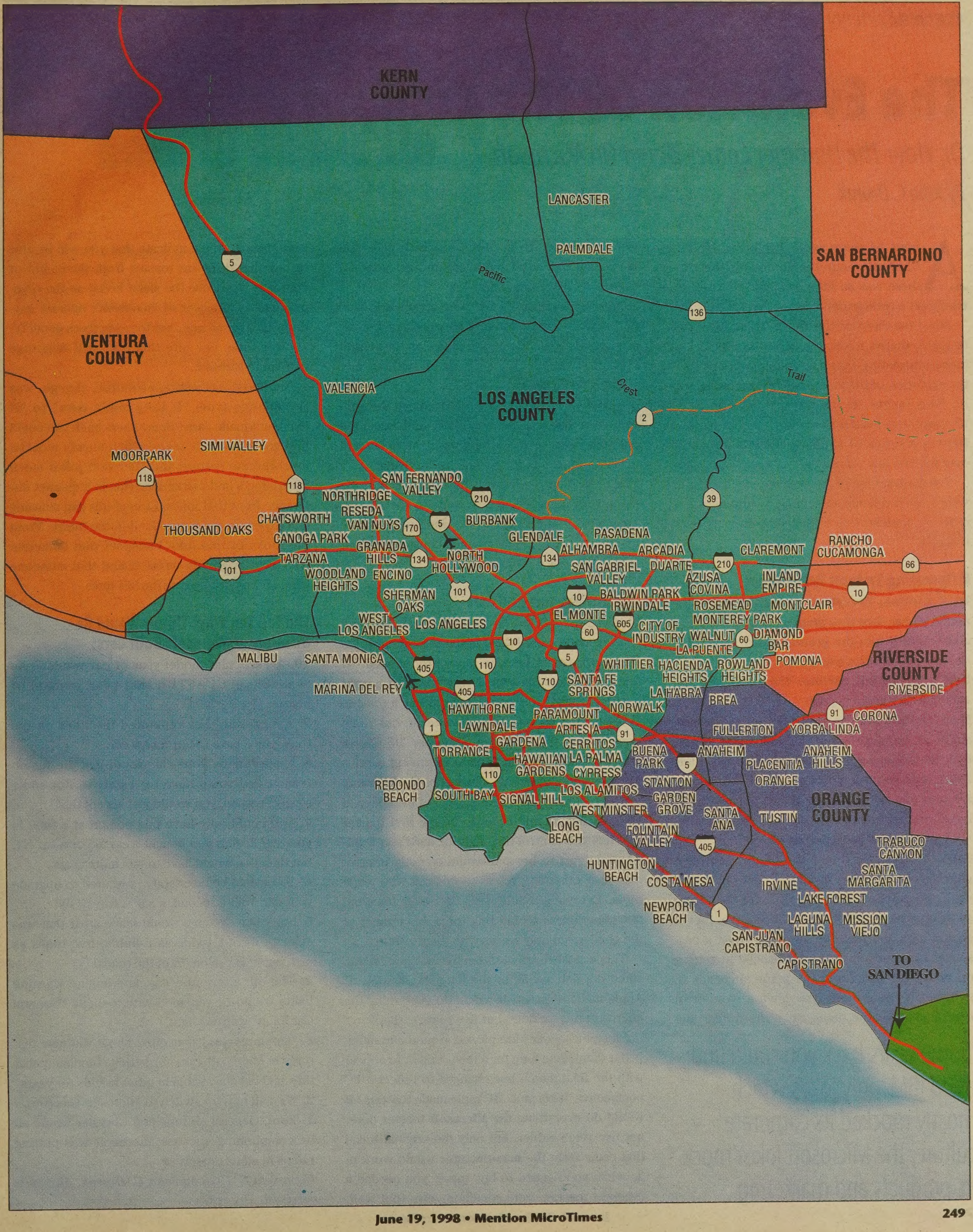
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The Evolution Of The Computer Joke

Or, How The Hammer Comes Down On Microsoft

By John C. Dvorak

About 10 years ago I attempted to do a book of computer humor. At the time there was so little available that I could barely get a column out of it.

Since the dawn of the Web-enabled exchange of jokes, there's a ton of material available. But more interesting than the jokes themselves is the evolution of the jokes from general to specific. The target, more and more, has been Microsoft—at least for the more elaborate jokes. Here is a series of similar gags that appeared over the last few years.

The earliest type of gag was the relational joke where you'd ridicule something by putting it in a different context. One of the earliest examples is this one:

If Operating Systems Ran Airlines

DOS Airline: Everybody pushes the airplane until it glides; then they jump on and let the plane coast until it hits the ground again, then push again, jump on again and so on.

DOS with QEMM Airline: The same thing but with more leg room to push.

Mac Airline: All the stewards, stewardesses, captains, baggage handlers, and ticket agents look the same, act the same, and talk the same. Every time you ask questions about details, you are told you don't need to know, don't want to know, and everything will be done for you without you having to know, so just shut up.

OS/2 Airline: To board the plane, you have your ticket stamped ten different times by standing in ten different lines. Then you fill out a form showing where you want to sit and whether it should look and feel like an ocean liner, a passenger train, or a bus. If you succeed in getting on board the plane and the plane succeeds in getting off the ground, you have a wonderful trip...except for the times when the rudder and flaps get frozen in position, in which case you have time to say your prayers and get yourself prepared before the crash.

> Some years back you could find good IBM-only jokes which mostly mocked its corporate culture; the Microsoft jokes mock its products and marketing.

Windows Airline: The airport terminal is nice and colorful, with friendly stewards and stewardesses, easy access to the plane, an uneventful takeoff...then the plane blows up without any warning whatsoever.

NT Airline: Everyone marches out on the runway, says the password in unison, and forms the outline of an airplane. Then they all sit down and make a whooshing sound like they're flying.

UNIX Airline: Everyone brings one piece of the plane with them when they come to the airport. They all go out on the runway and put the plane together piece by piece, arguing constantly about what kind of plane they're building.

Making Toasters And Cars

This evolved into the "If they Made toasters" and "if they made cars" jokes. In the toasters gag, the Microsoft aspect became more pronounced. "If Microsoft made toasters...Every time you bought a loaf of bread, you would have to buy a toaster. You wouldn't have to take the toaster, but you'd have to pay for it anyway. Toaster '95 would weigh 15,000 pounds (hence requiring a reinforced steel countertop), draw enough electricity to power a small city, take up 95% of the space in your kitchen, would claim to be the first toaster that lets you control how light or dark you wanted your toast to be, and would secretly interrogate your other appliances to find out who made them. Everyone would hate Microsoft toasters, but nonetheless would buy them since most of the good bread only works with their toasters."

This was obviously written by an Apple fanatic since the punch line to the longish list was, "If Apple made toasters...It would do everything the Microsoft toaster does, but five years earlier."

Since these jokes are passed around and modified it didn't take long for a new version to appear with the final punch line changed to reflect a PC perspective. It became: "If Apple made toasters...It would do everything the Microsoft toaster does, but five years earlier...but only the original bread that came from the manufacturer would work in it...when you needed to buy more...you needed a different toaster...from somebody else (but wait, new plans at Apple indicate that you will be able to buy that different toaster from them...but of course it won't use the same bread as the original...and as a matter of fact...won't operate anything like the old one...but they say that's good!!!)"

Over time, I'm sure this joke will reemerge with more sarcasm.

The most interesting evolution, though, was the change from "If they made cars" to "If Microsoft made cars." Some years back you could find good IBM-only jokes which mostly mocked its corporate culture; the Microsoft jokes mock its products and marketing. This is a distinct difference from IBM jokes. I found this gag amusing and expect to see more like it in the future. From the looks of this joke I suspect that someone from Sun originally wrote it and that someone from Microsoft re-wrote the last lines.

The Top Ten Ways Things Would Be Different If Microsoft Built Cars:

10. A Particular model year of car wouldn't be available until AFTER that year, instead of before.

9. Every time they repainted the lines on the road, you'd have to buy a new car.

8. Occasionally your car would just die for no reason and you'd have to restart it. For some strange reason, you would just accept this.

7. You could only have one person at a time in your car, unless you bought a car '95 or a car NT, but then you would have to buy more seats.

6. You would be constantly pressured to upgrade your car. Wait a second, it's that way NOW!

5. Sun Microsystems would make a car that was solar powered, twice as reliable, five times as fast, but only ran on 5% of the roads.

4. The oil, alternator, gas, and engine warning lights would be replaced with a single "General Car Fault" warning light.

3. People would get excited about the new features in Microsoft cars, forgetting completely that they had been available in other brands for years.

2. We'd all have to switch to Microsoft Gas (tm).

1. Ford, General Motors, and Chrysler would all be complaining because Microsoft was putting radios in all its models. ◆

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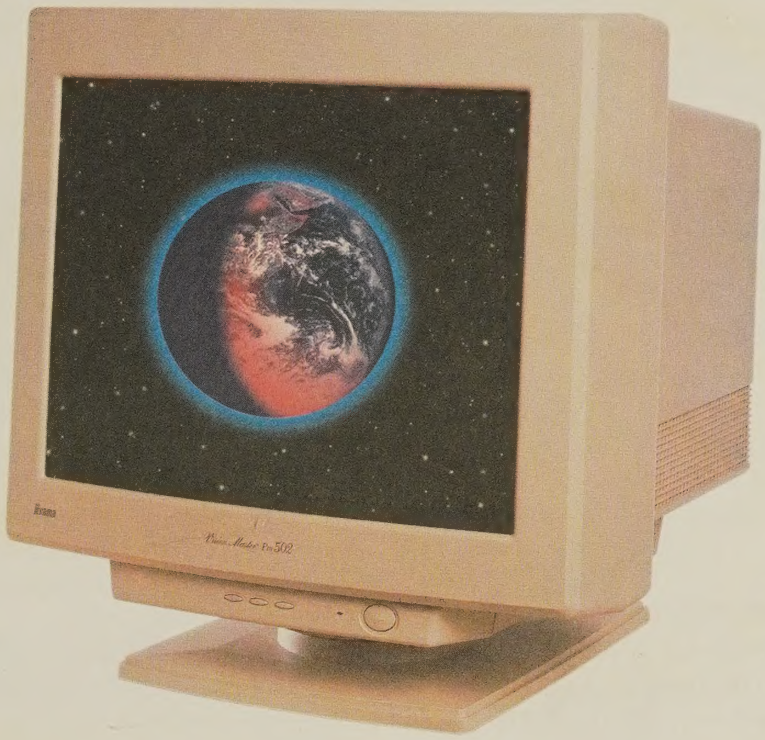

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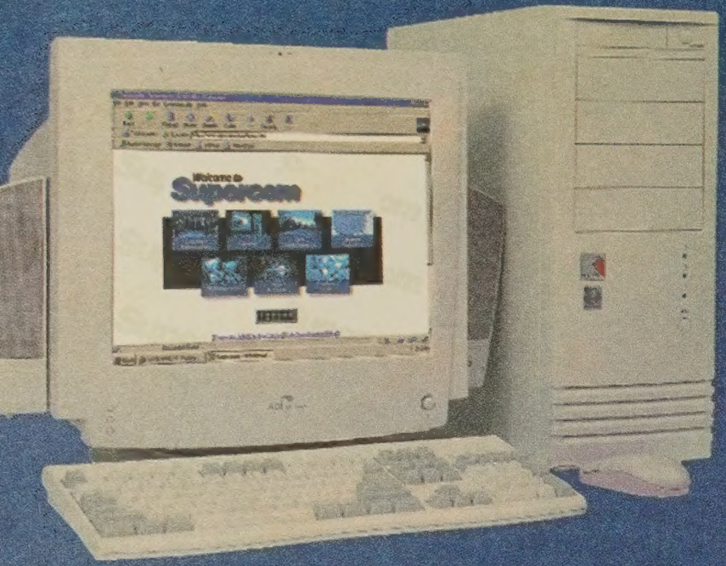

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